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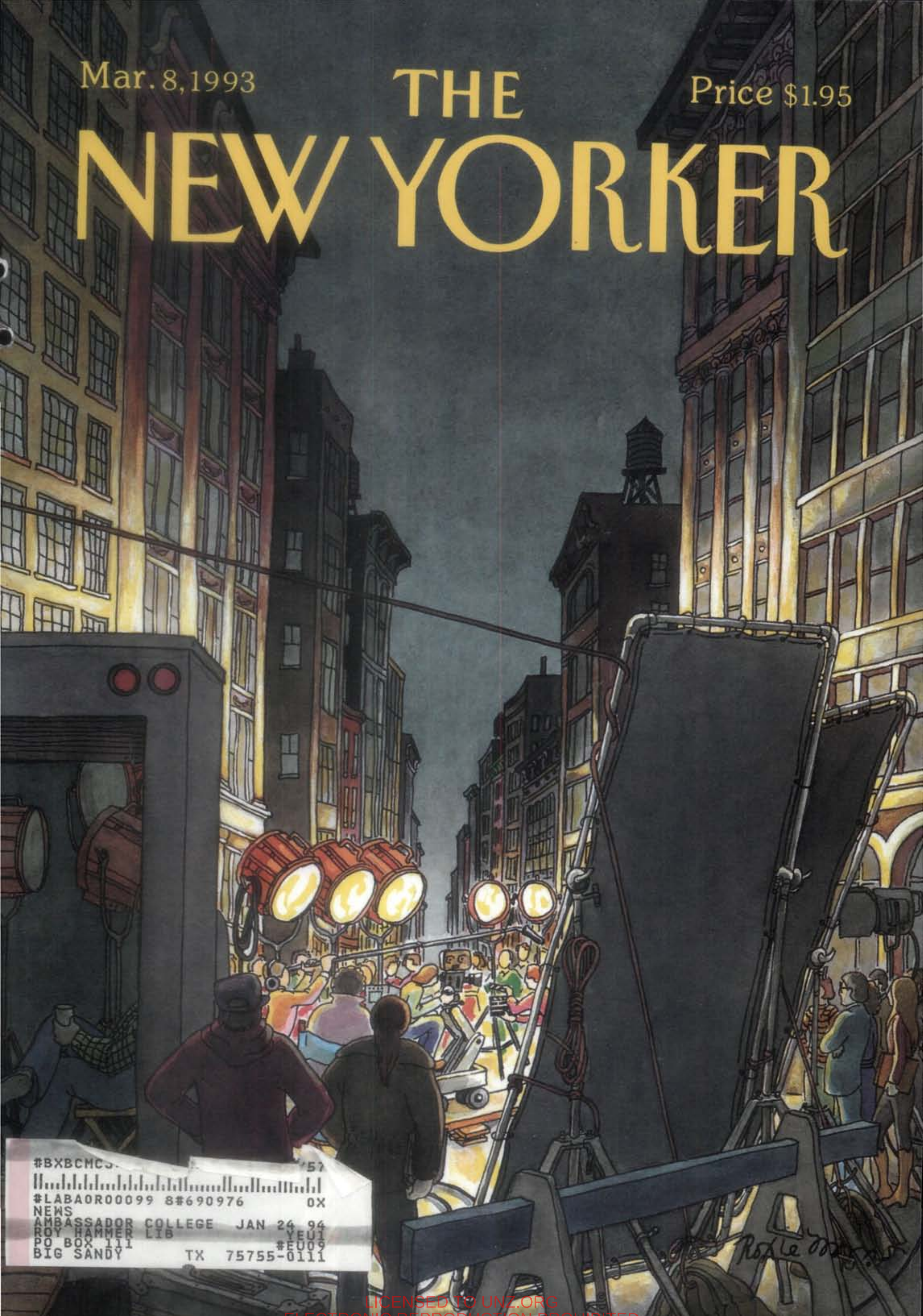

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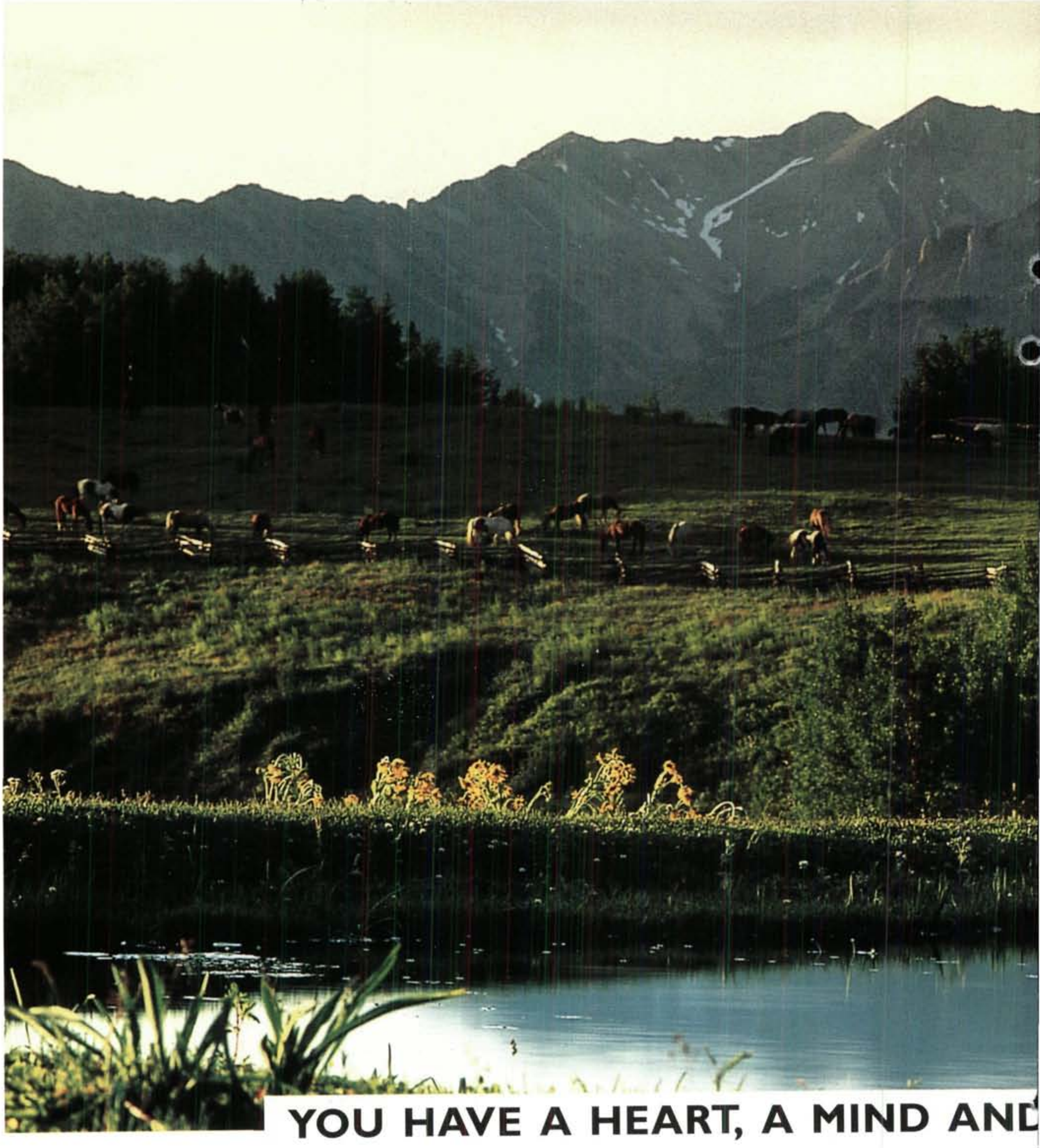

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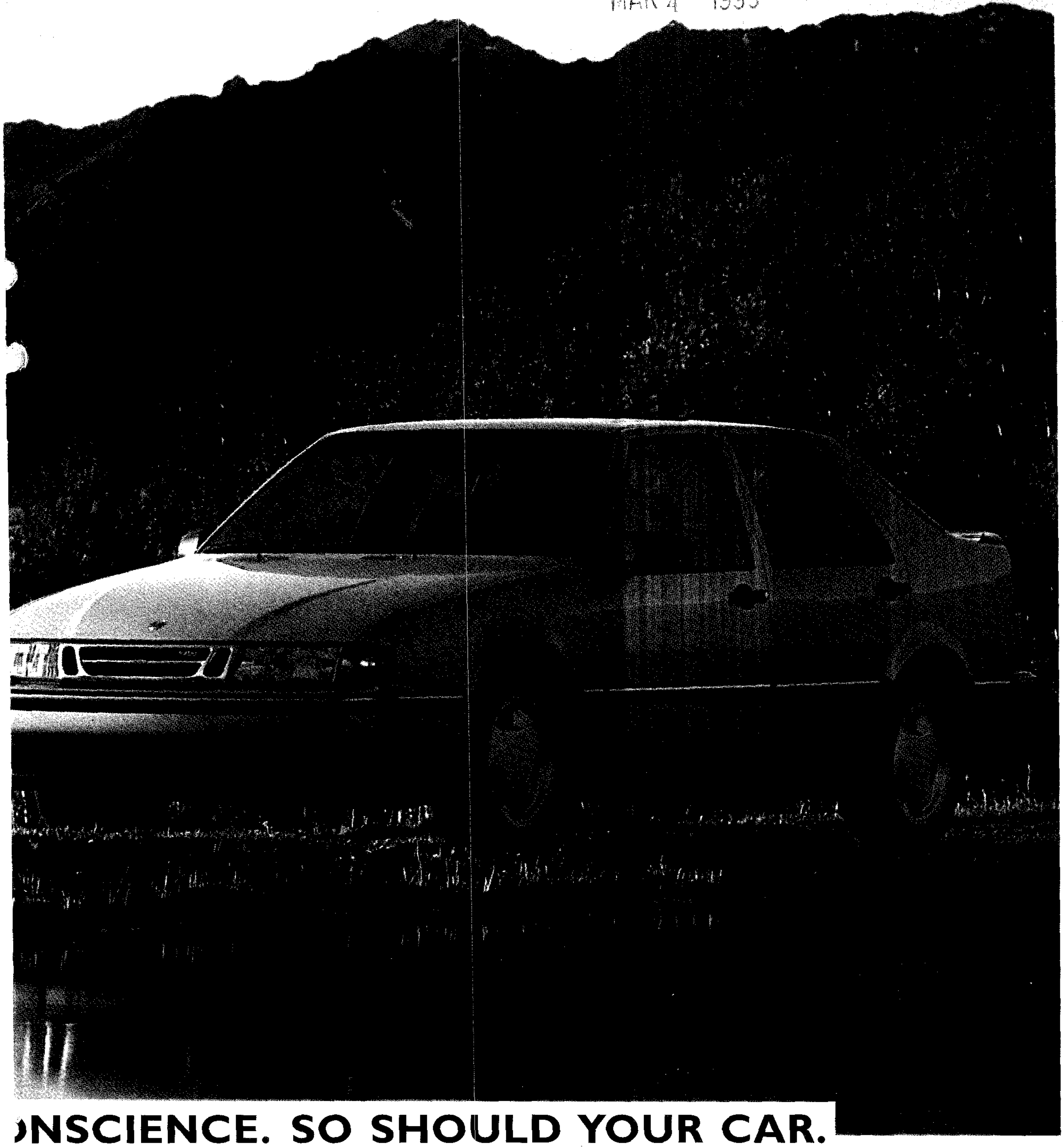

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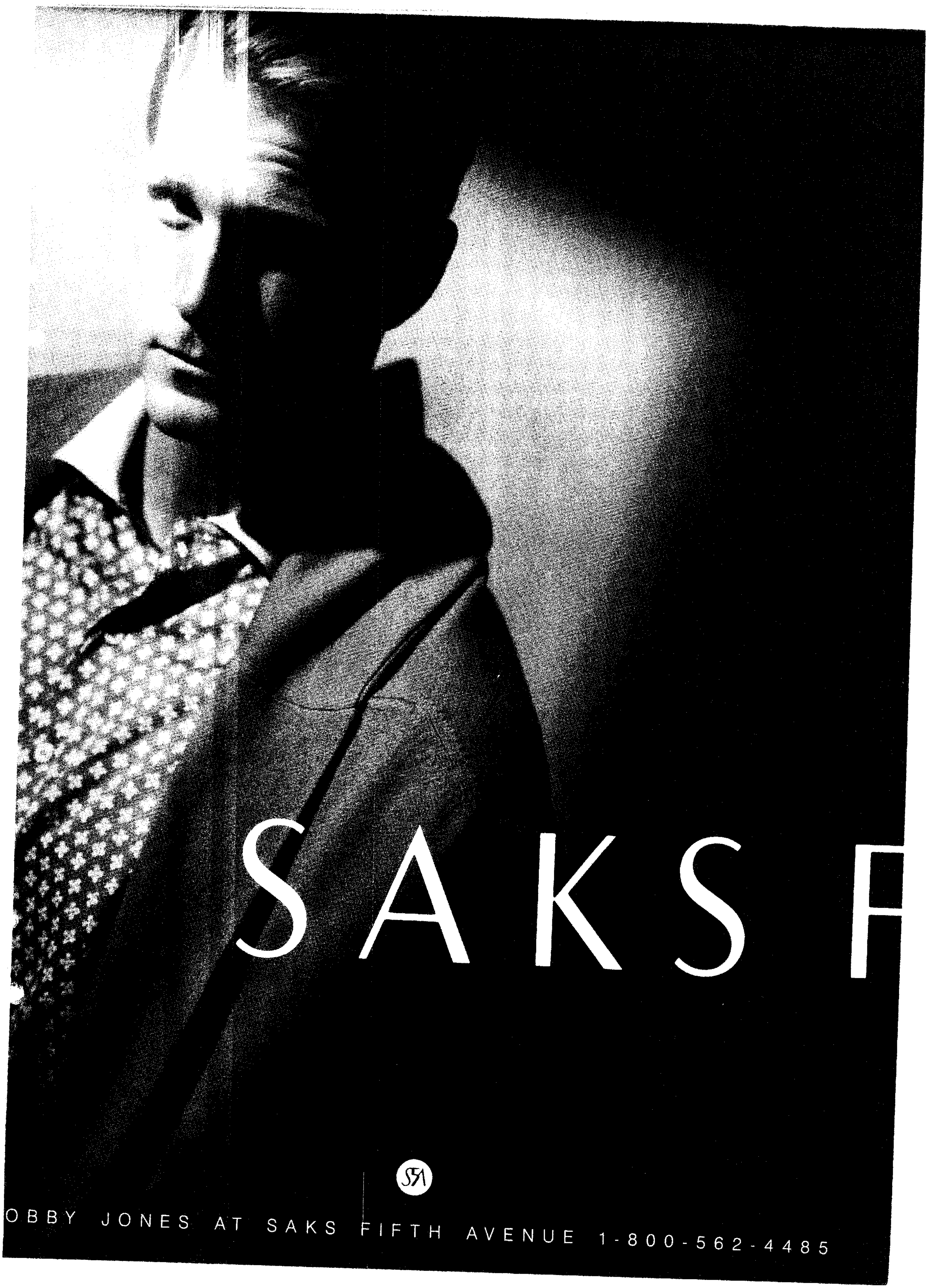
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COMMENT

HOPE RESTORED?

LAST week, three months after the live-on-CNN landing of American troops, Mogadishu descended anew into violence. Despite the presence in Somalia of seventeen thousand United States Army soldiers and Marines, along with fourteen thousand troops from other countries, large mobs of young Somali men, many of them partisans of a local warlord who think that the foreign troops favor his rival, swarmed through the streets, looting buildings, setting fires, sacking the Egyptian Embassy, and attacking Americans and other foreigners with rocks, guns, and hand grenades. The rioting in Mogadishu, together with violent outbreaks elsewhere in the country, raises questions about the practicability of plans to withdraw most of the Americans next month, leaving three or four thousand logistical support troops to participate in a United Nations force under a Turkish general. It also raises questions about the entire operation, so promisingly named.

Operation Restore Hope was undertaken for motives that were, on their face, remarkably free of the usual calculations of strategic or national interest. Of course, the suspicion lingers that President Bush was not averse to lending his final days in office a touch of global class: when the Marines went in, the post-election snickering about Mr. Bush stopped abruptly. But the nearly universal support the mission has enjoyed at home is altogether unrelated to the side effect of restoring Mr. Bush's dignity. The intervention has been popular because its heart was seen as pure. Its aim was to help the starving people of Somalia, and it is on that basis alone that it must be judged.

Mr. Bush said at the outset that the troops were going in to create a "secure environment," which might be interpreted to mean protecting the food convoys, systematically disarming the Somali factions, or even creating conditions under which the Somalis could

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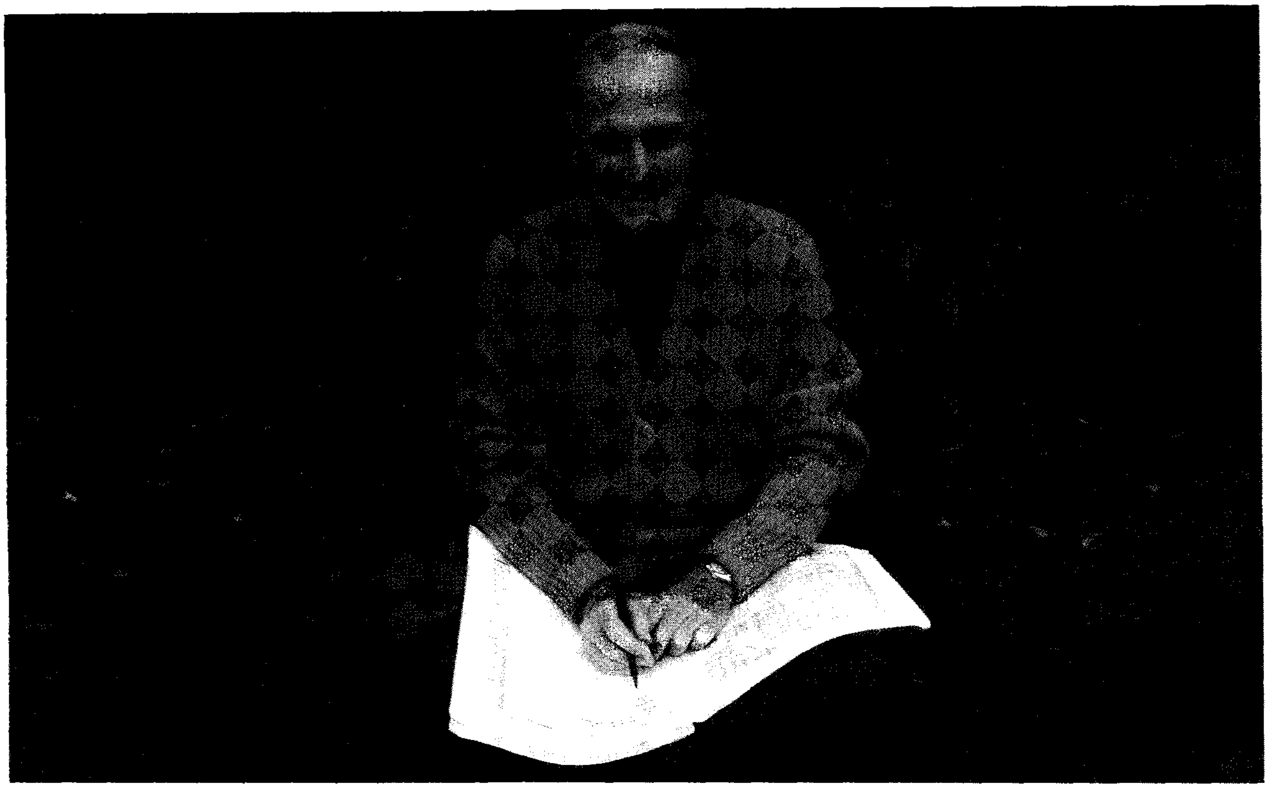

"I've finally found a way to repay the wonderful gifts I've received from music." *Sir Yehudi Menuhin*

When he was just two years old, Yehudi Menuhin's parents took him to hear the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. "I remember how the sweet, lovely sound of the violin drifted up to the gallery," he recalls. "I was so enraptured that, for my fourth birthday, I asked for a violin of my own."

Menuhin got his wish and, at age seven, he made his first public appearance. By age thirteen, he had performed in New York, Paris, and Berlin, where Albert Einstein came to his dressing room, hugged him, and exclaimed, "Now I know there is a God in heaven."

Today, Menuhin's great passion is for the music academy he founded in Surrey, England. "The children who come here are like my extended family," he explains. "It gives me so much pleasure to see them grow—both as people and as musicians. I know the pressures of being a young musician, so I can relate to them in a way others perhaps cannot."

As he passes on his wisdom about music, Menuhin also stirs in his students a strong appreciation for the instruments they play—and the patient skill that goes into making them. "I teach the students that a well-made violin or piano is a work of art in itself," he says. No wonder, then, that when Sir Yehudi Menuhin selected a timepiece, he looked to an equally impressive example of craftsmanship and beauty. Rolex.

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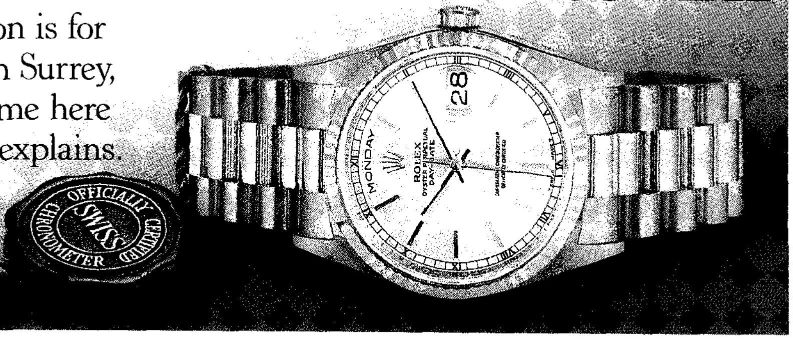
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begin to forge a civil society with some hope of feeding itself. The latter seems no closer to realization now than it was twelve weeks ago; it may actually be more distant. But Mr. Bush, even as he announced the operation, made it plain that nothing so ambitious was contemplated. "Our mission," he said, "has a limited objective: to open the supply routes, to get the food moving, and to prepare the way for a U.N. peacekeeping force to keep it moving."

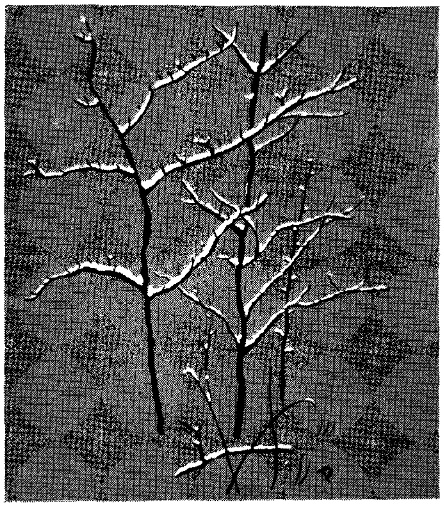
The Pentagon's complacent view of its own performance—General Colin Powell has called the conduct of the mission "splendid"—is in part a product of the extreme modesty of its goals. It is by no means clear, however, that the intervention, even when judged by such narrow standards, has been successful enough to justify itself. The relief organizations whose work the intervention was supposed to facilitate have nothing to gain from alienating the soldiers in their midst, and have generally confined their public comments to praise of the intervention's positive aspects. But in private many of the aid workers on the ground have been caustic about what they see as the clumsiness and arrogance of their military helpers.

One positive effect of the intervention is that the port and the airport of Mogadishu are functioning again—or, at least, they were until last week's outbreaks. So are several of the town's main thoroughfares, which are patrolled by military vehicles of the multinational forces. Convoys escorted by foreign troops do reach their destinations inland, and fewer Somalis are starving to death. Aid workers point out, though, that the peak of the famine was in September, and that it had already begun to recede when the troops came in.

But Somalia is still a very dangerous place. At least four relief workers have been assassinated since the Americans arrived. The number of new gunshot-wound victims stands at only a tenth of the atrocious level it reached during the civil war, but many Somalis have been killed as a result of overreacting by American soldiers. In a moving report on the plight of a Somali woman after the killing of her thirteen-year-old son by a marine who thought the boy was about to lob a grenade or a bomb into his vehicle, Diana Jean Schemo, of the *Times*, noted that "American military spokesmen have related the individual killings of more than two dozen Somalis, but refuse to release information on the total number killed." Perhaps the explanation can be found in what a marine who killed a Somali man—after entering his house uninvited and being threatened with a machine gun—said to John Lancaster, of the Washington *Post*: "They tell us it's a humanitarian mission, and not combat, [but] it's a little hard to take us out of that mode."

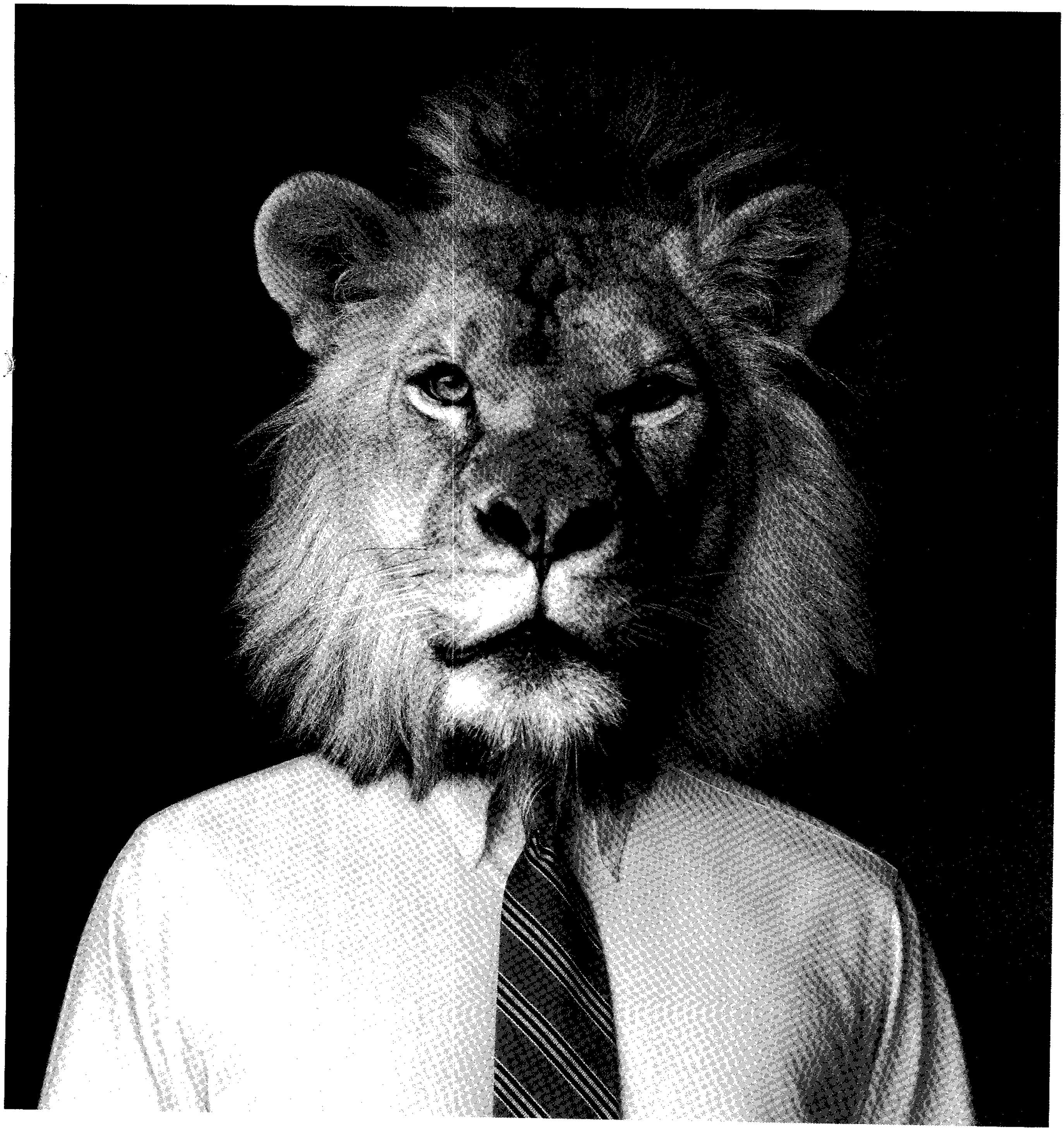
The power that the United States has brought to bear on Somalia is at once too much and too little for the job. The mission was only partly successful in disarming the main warring factions because, as last week's outbreaks showed, enough weapons remain in Somalia for the lawlessness and looting to resume whenever the foreign troops lower their guard. In any case, the "enemy" in Somalia consists less of organized military units than of bandits and thugs, sometimes associated with political factions and sometimes not. The kind of "overwhelming force" that the United States military command insists on showing off is therefore of limited utility. In a recent raid on the town of Afgoi, near Mogadishu, for instance, seven hundred soldiers and seventeen Blackhawk helicopters recovered a single Second World War-era rifle. Though such displays are occasionally effective, they may end up depreciating the currency of force. Will equally sophisticated and heavy equipment be needed from now on to impress the perpetrators of violence?

Yet, if the military trappings are too belligerent, the non-military side of the intervention has been too weak. Members of the local élite say that they have rarely been approached by American officers, and that as a result they feel ignored. European relief workers, too, complain about being insufficiently consulted, and they are convinced that, compared with the other foreign troops there, the Americans were poorly briefed about the country, its people, and the peculiar character of this mission.



Operation Restore Hope has cost very few American lives; so far, two marines and one civilian employee of the Army have been killed. But the financial price is high: as much as two billion dollars of the taxpayers' money will have been spent by the time it's over. By contrast, the International Committee of the Red Cross, delivering twenty thousand tons of food a month to Somalia, in the largest operation it has ever mounted, spent roughly two hundred and fifty million dollars in the whole of 1992. (Moreover, the I.C.R.C.'s spokesman, Horst Hamborg, disputes estimates, often repeated in the American media, that before the intervention eighty per cent of the food destined for Somalia was being stolen; he says that the loss to theft was less than ten per cent.)

The use of American military power for purely humanitarian ends surely represents a moral advance, and the experiment is likely to be repeated. But one thing that already seems clear is that the justly acclaimed logistical capacities of the United States military would have been used more efficiently by a less heavily armed, less combat-oriented group of soldiers, which might have earned the coöperation of all the factions. During the Cold War, the armed forces adapted themselves to fighting the "unconventional" wars that broke out on the periphery of the superpower struggle. If Somalia is any indication, the post-Cold War future will include some wars so unconventional that they can hardly be called wars at all. American troops will have to be trained for such missions. They don't get that kind of training now. In fact, one of them told a reporter recently, "I think every marine came here with the idea that he might get a chance to get a confirmed kill." ♦



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

Some Enchanted Evenings

RODGERS and Hammerstein are in no danger of fading from view, what with more than two thousand seven hundred American productions of their musicals last year alone. But the fact that none of the team's Big Five shows have been revived on Broadway in a while—"The King and I" was the most recent, in 1985—may make some New Yorkers feel that it's been too long since they've had a proper live listen to an R & H score. The acclaimed London revival of "Carousel," which is likely to arrive at either Lincoln Center or the St. James Theatre in the spring of '94, will constitute their next chance. In the meantime, anyone hungering for midtown exposure to the team's work has a splendid opportunity just now. Rainbow & Stars, the sky-high cabaret in Rockefeller Center, is home to "A Grand Night for Singing: The Rodgers & Hammerstein Revue," through April 10. The performers are Victoria Clark, Jason Graae, Martin Vidnovic, Lynne Wintersteller, and Karen Ziémba.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

AVEN' U BOYS—A play by Frank Pugliese, with Ron Eldard, Michael Imperioli, Lucinda Jenney, Cynthia Martells, Adrian Pasdar, and Lili Taylor. Previews through March 7. Opens March 8 at 6:30. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

THE BEST OF FRIENDS—A play by Hugh Whitemore, with Roy Dotrice, Michael Allinson, and Diana Douglas. The work is about George Bernard Shaw and two of his friends, Sir Sydney Cockerell and the Abbess of Stanbrook. This drama was first done in 1988, in London. Previews through March 6. Opens March 7 at 7. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

CANDIDA—Shaw's play, with Mary Steenburgen, Robert Foxworth, and Robert Sean Leonard. Gloria Muzio directed. Previews begin March 5. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

THE GOODBYE GIRL—Bernadette Peters and Martin Short star in a new musical by Neil Simon (book), Marvin Hamlisch (score), and David Zippel (lyrics). Adapted from the 1977 movie by Mr. Simon. Two previews on March 3. Opens March 4 at 6:30. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

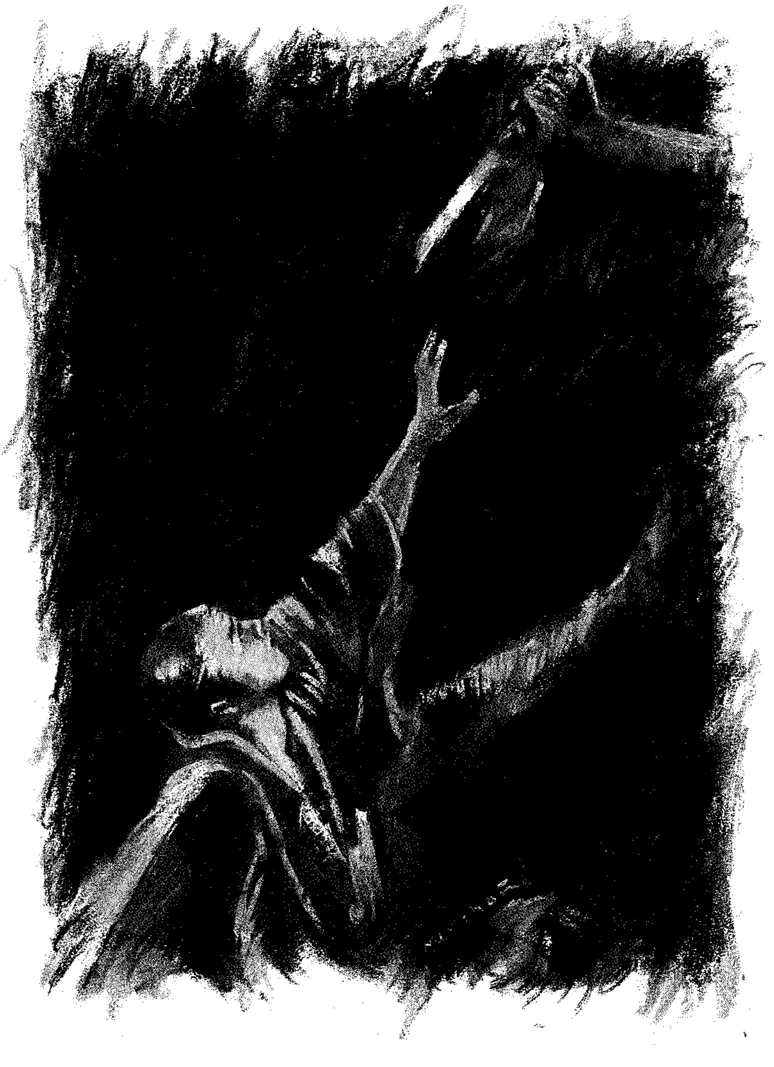
LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST—Shakespeare's comedy. A Theatre for a New Audience production. Previews March 3-5. Opens March 6 at 7, and runs through April 3. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

PUTTING IT TOGETHER—A celebration of Stephen Sondheim's music, which was first seen last year in Oxford, England. With Julie Andrews, Stephen Collins, Christopher Durang, Michael Rupert, and Rachel York. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

THE REVIVAL OF BLACK WOMEN'S STORIES: ONE DEAF EXPERIENCE—A revised version of a work by Michelle Banks, presented in American Sign Language, with simultaneous voice interpretation. Opens March 3 at 8, and runs through March 14. For reservations, call 427-1880 TDD, for hearing impaired callers; or 606-3722, for hearing callers. (Open Eye Staging, 270 W. 89th St.)

WINGS—Jeffrey Lunden and Arthur Perlman's musical adaptation of a 1978 play by Arthur Kopit. The musical premièred last year at Chicago's Goodman Theatre and will be staged here with the original cast. Previews through March 8. Opens March 9 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

YABUHARA KENGYO ("THE GREAT DOCTOR YABUHARA")—Tokyo's Chijinkai Theatre presents a 1973 black comedy by Hisashi Inoue. This production was seen at the Edinburgh Festival in 1990. In Japanese, with English supertitles. Three performances only: March 4 at 7 and March 5-6 at 8. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)



Yasuyoshi Hara in "Yabuhara Kengyo."

OPENED RECENTLY

BUBBE MEISES, BUBBE STORIES—A musical written by, and starring, Ellen Gould. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

THE DESTINY OF ME—Or "Confrontations with My Father." Larry Kramer's latest work is rarely less than involving, but the dramatic structure—a family-memory play grafted onto the present-day story of an exhausted, love-seeking AIDS activist—breaks down for good in the second act. Many people who stay for the third act, however, claim to be deeply moved by the conclusion. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

FIVE WOMEN WEARING THE SAME DRESS—A play, by Alan Ball—a writer with star sitcom potential—about bridesmaids in a wedding Knoxville, Tennessee. Everything here—the direction, the cast, the dress—is peachy. (Manhattan Class Company, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765. Closes March 13.)

FOOL MOON—A comedy by Bill Irwin and David Shiner. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1993—Once again, a galaxy of parodies that sharpen into satire. This new edition is as funny as most of its predecessors. Among the new shows under consideration are "Guys and Dolls" and "Falsettos," and among the holdovers are "Les Misérables" and "The Phantom of the Opera." Gerard Alessandrini, as if you had to be told, is the inspired writer and director, and Susanne Blakeslee, Dorothy Kiara, Brad Oscar, and Craig Wells are the splendid performers, doing a large assortment of roles. (Reviewed in our issue of 1/25/93.) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

GET HUR—A whodunit by Ray Dobbin, presented by the British company Bloolips. Featuring Bette Bourne and Precious Pearl. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Closes March 7.)

THE HELIOTROPE BOUQUET BY SCOTT JOPLIN & LOUIS CHAUVIN—A play, with ragtime music, by Eric Overmyer. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

HELLO MUDDAH, HELLO FADDUH—A musical based on the song parodies of Allan Sherman and offering further proof that Camp Lite is taking over Off Broadway. The show was conceived and written by Douglas Bernstein and Rob Krausz. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

JEAN COCTEAU REPERTORY—Presenting two shows in rotating rep: **THE IDIOT**, an adaptation, by David Fishelson, of Dostoyevski's novel; and Shakespeare's **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.** (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

JEFFREY—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS; with John Michael Higgins. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. Recently seen at the

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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

WPA Theatre, the play begins performances here on March 6. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

The Last Yankee—A play by Arthur Miller, with John Heard, Tom Aldredge, Frances Conroy, and Rose Gregorio. (2/1/93) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes March 7.)

The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me—A series of vignettes, by the rising writer/performer David Drake, about contemporary gay life. Mr. Drake is more gifted as a performer than as a writer, but his show is frequently absorbing—by turns silly and poignant. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038.)

Oleanna—David Mamet, in fine, curmudgeonly form, takes on political correctness, sexual harassment, and a number of other topics in this brief, powerful drama that continues to stir up the ideologues. The play's skepticism is as evenhanded as it is corrosive. With William H. Macy and Mary McCann. Not to be missed. (11/16/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100.)

On the Open Road—A play by Steve Tesich, with Byron Jennings and Anthony LaPaglia. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes March 7.)

Phaedra—Joanne Camp has the title role in Jean Racine's play (in a new translation by Margaret Rawlings). (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes March 20.)

Robert Johnson: Trick the Devil—A play about the legendary blues musician, by William Harris. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. Closes March 21. For reservations, call 576-9028.)

Saint Joan—Maryann Plunkett, as Maid, and Michael Langham, as director, together rescue the faltering National Actors Company, as well as France. Jay O. Sanders, Nicholas Kepros, Lorne Kennedy, and Michael Stuhlbarg (as Dauphin) give strong support. Distinguished settings by Marjorie Bradley Kellogg. (2/15/93) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280. Closes March 14.)

Samuel's Major Problems—A play written and directed by Richard Foreman. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Closes March 7. For reservations, call 533-4650.)

Scapin—A musical production of Molière's comedy, which is lively to the point of mania. Rusty Magee wrote the undistinguished score and lyrics, and Andrei Belgrader, the director, is also partly responsible for the cheesy adaptation. Stanley Tucci is as busy as can be in the title role; his resemblance to Al Pacino does him no harm but not much good, either. Even Mary Testa as Zerbinette cannot rescue this mess. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes March 7.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's new play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. They are portrayed by Jane Alexander, Christine Estabrook, and Madeline Kahn. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. Seen recently at Lincoln Center's Mitzi E. Newhouse, the show has now moved to Broadway. (11/2/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me—Alec McCowen (English), Stephen Rea (Irish), and James McDaniel (American) give stunning performances as hostages in Beirut in Frank McGuinness's moving and humorous play. Robin Lefèvre directed. (12/7/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

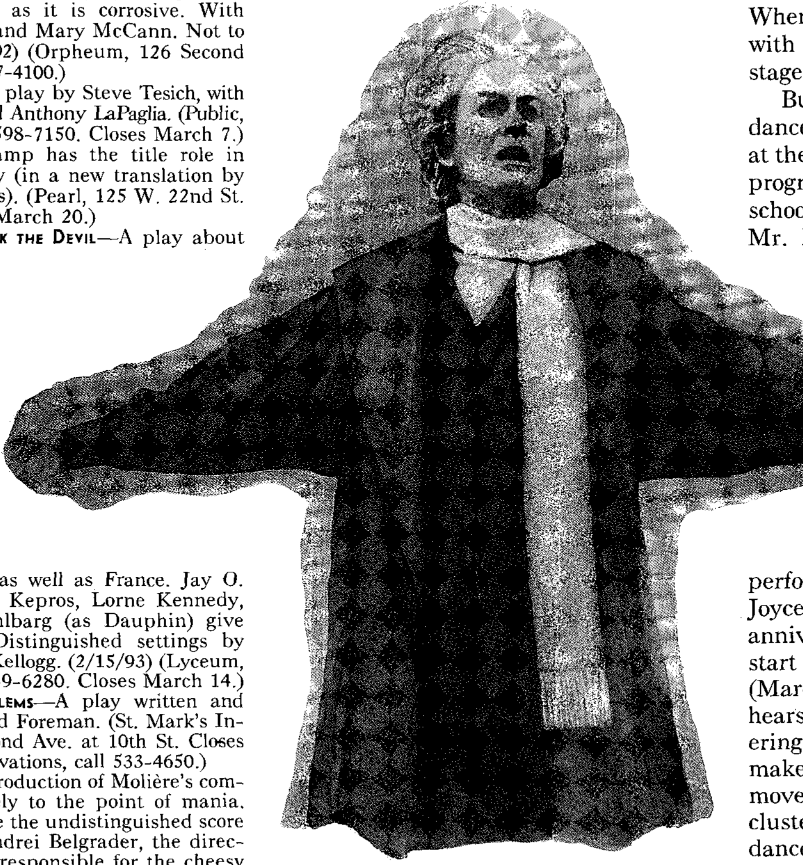
Tapestry: The Music of Carole King—A musical revue. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-9251.)

Two Rooms—Laura Esterman and Jeffrey Hayenga in a play by Lee Blessing, presented by Signature Theatre Company. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes March 7.)

The View from Here—A comedy by Margaret Dulaney. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Wilder, Wilder, Wilder: Three by Thornton—A return engagement of the Willow Cabin Theatre Company's production of Thornton Wilder's one-act plays "The Long Christmas Dinner," "The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden," and "Pullman Car Hiawatha." (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 662-8562.)

Wrong Turn at Lungfish—A play by Garry Marshall and Lowell Ganz, with George C. Scott, Jami Gertz, Tony Danza, and Kelli Williams. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)



Linda Stephens in "Wings."

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER:** Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **FALSETTOS:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JELLY'S LAST JAM:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, *245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.* . . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.

DANCE

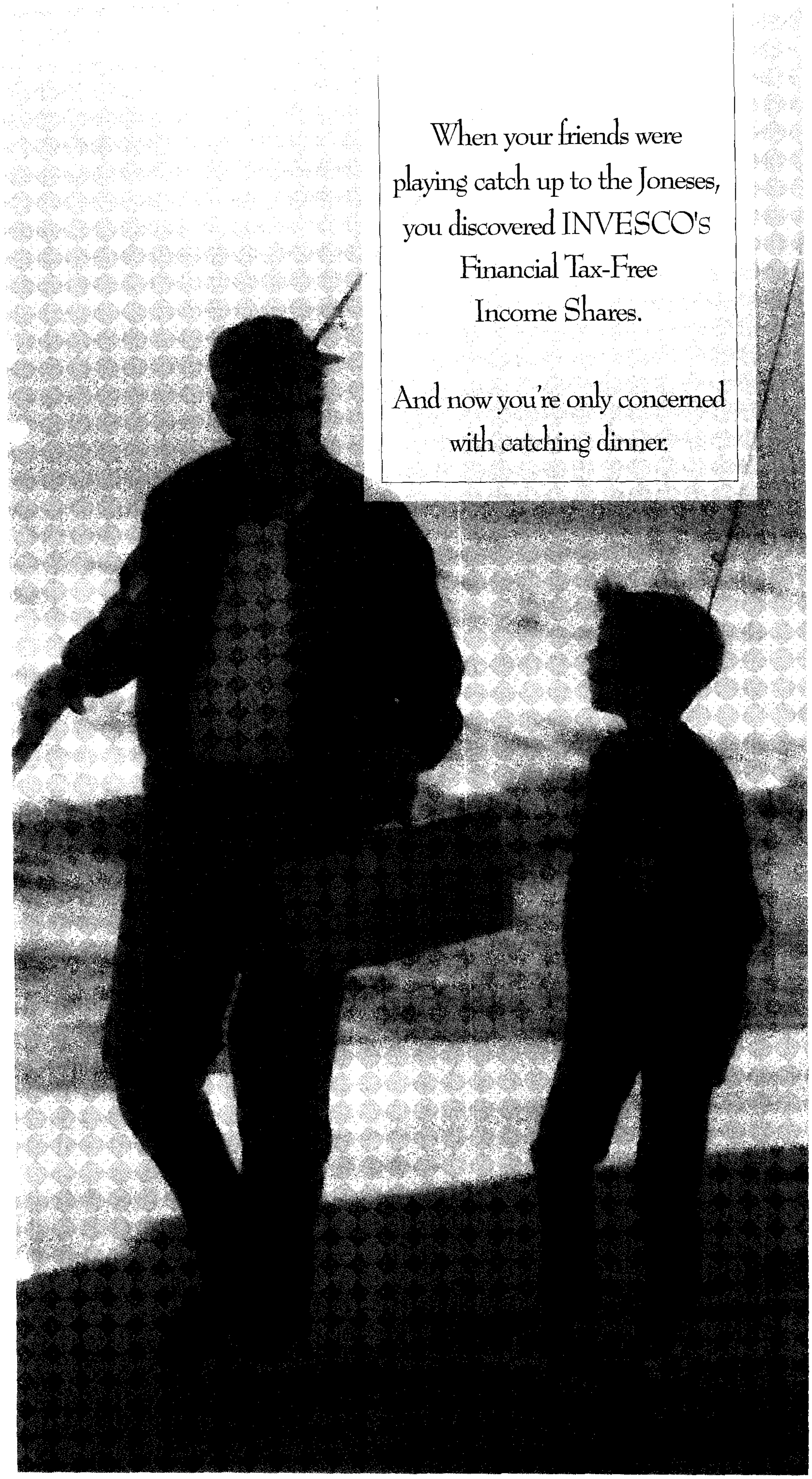
First Steps

THE look of youth in a dancer often comes down to a display of courage. During the dance boom of the nineteen-seventies, no one looked younger than Christine Sarry. In the course of her twenty-three-year performing career (with Eliot Feld, the Joffrey Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre), Ms. Sarry became the dance world's Peter Pan—a quicksilver stripling who, thanks to her gumption, seemed to cast a gigantic shadow. She could show you how to fly without going on automatic pilot and how to hope without playing the fool. When, in 1987, she became pregnant with her son, Max, she retired from the stage, leaving a hole in our field of vision.

But Ms. Sarry did not retire from dance altogether. She continues to teach at the New Ballet School, the tuition-free program for New York City public-school children which is associated with Mr. Feld's company, Feld Ballets/NY. The other day, as Max watched, she coached some of the students in a revival of Mr. Feld's 1978 "Half Time"—a work that was made on her, and one of the ballets to be performed at a gala (March 4, at the Joyce) to celebrate the school's fifteenth anniversary, which coincides with the start of the company's spring season (March 2-April 4). She closed the rehearsal—which had gone well—by delivering a little maxim about the way to make it go better. "Don't mark the movement!" she said to the fingerlings clustered around her. "The more you dance full out in the studio, the more comfortable you'll be onstage. This is your time." Earlier, she had confided to a visitor, "I'm really into being a mom, but I've still got a dancer's heart."

Bavarian National Ballet of the Munich State Opera—Final performances of the engagement. March 3 at 11 A.M. and 8, March 5 at 8, and March 7 at 7:30: "Don Quixote.". . . ¶ March 4 at 8: "Five Tangos," "Piano Concerto," "Grosse Fugue," and "Les Noces.". . . ¶ March 6 at 2 and 8: "Onegin." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Feld Ballets/NY—March 3 at 8: "Harbinger," "Clave," "Frets and Women" (première), and "Wolfgang Strategies.". . . ¶ March 4 at 7:30: A gala with students of the New Ballet School, plus "The Relative Disposition of the Parts" (première). . . . ¶ March 5 at 8: "Harbinger," "Clave," "Frets and Women," and "Contra Pose.". . . ¶ March 6 at 8: "Aurora I," "Circa," and "Wolfgang Strategies.". . . ¶ March 7 at 2: "Contra Pose," "Evoe," "Hadji," and "The Jig Is Up.". . . ¶ March 7 at 7:30: "Danzon Cubano," "Ion," "Endsong," and "The Relative Disposition of the



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DANCE—Cont'd

Parts." . . . ¶ March 9 at 8: "Aurora I," "Circa," and "Common Ground." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through April 4.)

Wendy Perron Dance Company—With guest artist Peter Boal. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. March 4-6 at 8 and March 7 at 3.)

Merce Cunningham Dance Company—The opening performance of a two-week engagement: "Beach Birds" and "Enter" (New York première). (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. March 9 at 7:30. Through March 21.)

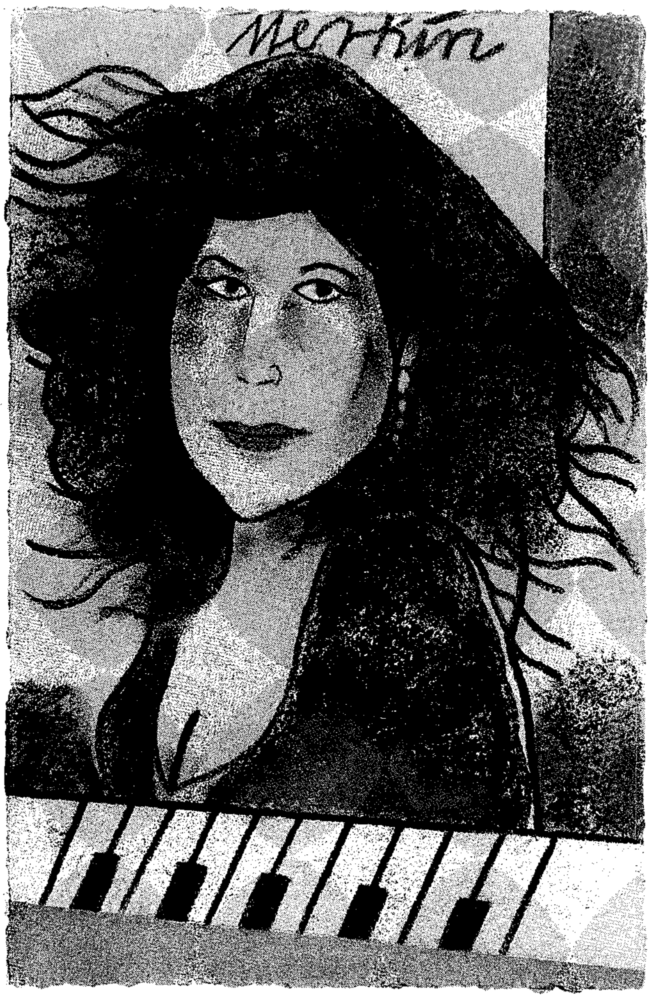
Balanchine Events—Over the next few months, in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the choreographer's death, dancers of all ages will be talking about Mr. B. Here's a roundup of the discussions that have been scheduled. The participants are named when known. On the Promenade of the New York State Theatre, the New York City Ballet Guild Seminars: "A Conversation with Jerome Robbins: Working with Balanchine" (March 8). . . . "The Diaghilev Years" (Nancy Reynolds, moderator; April 12). . . . "The Thirties" (Francis Mason, moderator; April 26). . . . "The Forties" (Nancy Norman Lassalle, moderator; May 10). . . . "The Fifties" (Clement Crisp, moderator; May 17). . . . "The Sixties" (Violette Verdy, moderator; May 24). . . . "The Seventies and an Overview" (June 21). Call 870-5677 for information. . . . ¶ At the Bruno Walter Auditorium of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center: Allegra Kent, in conversation with Mindy Aloff (March 11). . . . "Balanchine: Reconceiving Choreography for Television" (Merrill Brockway, Judy Kinberg, and Jac Venza; March 22). . . . "Balanchine, Jazz, and Popular Dance" (Katherine Dunham, Tamara Geva, Glory Van Scott, Arthur Mitchell, Harold Nicholas, and Sally Banes; April 19). . . . "Sixty Years of Looking at Balanchine" (May 17). . . . Suzanne Farrell, in conversation with David Daniel (May 27, June 17, and June 24). Call 870-1630 for information. . . . ¶ At the Metropolitan Museum of Art: "After Balanchine: A Decade of Change—Eight Interviews," conducted by John Gruen: Peter Martins (March 15). . . . Kyra Nichols (March 22). . . . Margaret Tracey (March 29). . . . Darci Kistler (April 12). . . . Peter Boal (April 19). . . . Wendy Whelan (April 26). . . . Jock Soto (May 3). . . . Robert LaFosse (May 10). Call 570-3949 for information. . . . ¶ At the 92nd Street Y: "Balanchine: The Broadway and Hollywood Years," with comments by Vera Zorina: "The Thirties" (April 1). . . . "The Forties" (April 8). Call 996-1100 for information.

NIGHT LIFE

Après Seattle

THE cultural juggernaut known as grunge has spawned several new idioms, one of the more fearsome of which is "the next Seattle." At the moment, several cities—San Diego, Columbus, Providence, Chapel Hill, and Halifax among them—are vying for that peculiar honor, but the front-runner seems to be Portland, Oregon.

One of Portland's more appealing offerings is Pond, which is known for its dreamy melodies and its insistent guitar rock, not to mention its lead singer's modified mop-top. Pond recently released a self-titled début record. It's full of swirling, pop-inflected alternative rock, with just enough heavy-metal riffs to keep things interesting. On March 6, the band will be at Maxwell's, where they will be appearing alongside the sublime Buffalo Tom; on March 9, they'll perform at CBGB.



Daryl Sherman at Tavern on the Green.

Th Faith Healers hail from London, that granddaddy of all Seattles. *Spin* magazine has called them "the greatest band in the world," but they're worth checking out anyway. The group's début album, "Lido," is rife with swift, jagged guitar work and trippy, minimalist vocals. Like Pond, Th Faith Healers put on manic stage shows, and they can be caught in the act at Maxwell's on March 4.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**daugherty & field**—a music-and-comedy team who have been known to sing "Blue Moon" and "Blue Room" at the same time—are currently at work in the Oak Room. Daugherty favors one-liners; Field, the pianist, prefers old-fashioned mugging. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall. The Ballroom is also a tapas restaurant—if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. The cabaret winds up its annual Brazil fest with **leci brandão**. Her eleventh album of samba and bossa nova is titled "Comprometida," and she begins work here on March 3.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, a gift shop, and, of course, those incredible shrinking aisles. When **angela bofill** was first heard from, in the late seventies, she had so much promise and such a big brash voice that no one seemed to know whether she'd lean toward jazz-fusion or Las Vegas. Since then, the singer, who grew up in Harlem and the west Bronx, has sung everything from Billie Holiday to Stevie Wonder. She's at work here through March 7. The **ernie krivda** sextet is in swing on March 8, and, as of March 9, the Blue Note will offer a double bill featuring the **george shearing** duo and the **jim hall** trio.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—An easy, comfortable place to take in a folk or rock show. **tower of power** originated in Oakland in the late sixties and reached critical mass about 1974, when it was led by a singer named Lenny Williams. The band plays taut, exacting, horn-heavy R. & B.—they've gone into the studio with everyone from Elton John to José Feliciano—and they can be seen here March 6-7.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—The art collection in this neighborhood restaurant, bar, and jazz club is a curator's worst nightmare. Fortunately, the musicians who gather round the Steinway each night are usually more harmonious. A topflight trio consisting of pianist **john hicks,** trumpeter **roy hargrove,** and bassist **walter booker** is in swing here through March 6. On March 7, a trio led by pianist **james williams** will begin a four-day engagement. Dining.

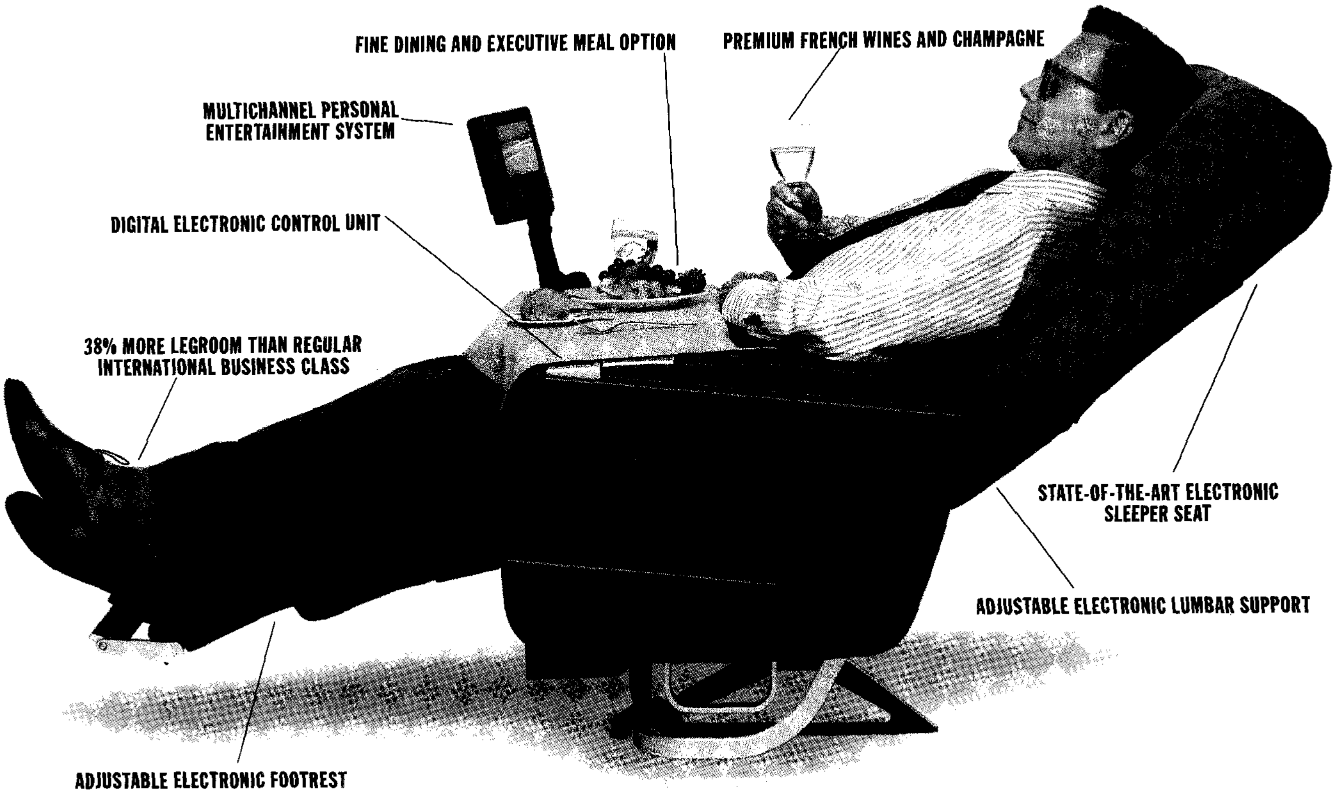
Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to **eartha kitt,** who jokingly refers to her show here as "the mature Eartha Kitt." Kitt has a staggering list of stage, TV, and recording credits. Most of her songs are tales of men and money, and she doesn't so much sing her lyrics as growl them, prowling the stage like a lioness protecting her cubs. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **ronny whyte** presides at the piano.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. This week's entries: **edsel** and **culture shock** (March 3), **carbon** (March 4), the **aquanettas** and **madder rose** (March 5), **von lomo** (March 6), and **pond** and **lotion** (March 9).

Downtime, 251 W. 30th St. (695-2747)—This two-tiered bar offers precisely one entrée: vegetable burritos. The musical menu is, thankfully, a bit more varied, spanning rock, blues, country, and the occasional reggae platter. Downtime is a pleasant place. There's a big, Cubist sort of music mural, a row of Art Deco lamps, and a decent-sized stage where the musicians are at work seven nights a week. The **paul collins band,** whose leader has served honorably with both the Beat and the dB's, is at work on March 5.

Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—Where swordfish leap on almost every wall. Where a cat with black and white spots sometimes walks the length of the bar. Where

THE DIFFERENCE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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

barbirds stare at football on the tube. And where, between the Sinatra and Streisand songs that emanate from the jukebox, one can often hear snatches of live folk and Irish music floating in from the bright back room. **JOHN WHELAN** and **JOHN MC GANN** are here on March 5.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—One of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. **RUTH BROWN** is here through March 7. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio.

FIVE SPOT, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—The latest entrant in the jazz-club sweepstakes. Set in a mammoth, turn-of-the-century ballroom that's been dormant for years, the club is all marble and gilt, with a few modern touches. **TUCK & PATTI** are here through March 7; **TERUO NAKAMURA** comes in on March 8; and **GEORGE DUKE** starts up on March 9. Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. On March 2, there is a free performance by **NO SMALL DREAMS.** On March 6, erstwhile Throwing Muse **KRISTIN HERSH** is here, along with She Never Blinks. (**CINDY LEE BERRYHILL** plays later that same night.) The Throwing Muses started out in the mid-eighties with some jagged and brilliant guitar pop, the best of which can be heard on the band's self-titled début album. Since then, the band has lost a few members—most notably, Tanya Donelly, who's just launched a first-rate alternative-rock group called Belly. The Muses' records have become increasingly spotty over the years, and it will be refreshing to see Hersh in a new context. On March 8, **PARADOX TRIO** (made up of four musicians) and **BIG JOE** share a double bill featuring electric cellos and dumbeks.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **TH FAITH HEALERS** and **VERSUS** are here on March 4; **KEVIN AYERS** comes in on March 5; **BUFFALO TOM** and **POND** share the bill on March 6; and March 7 belongs to **SHUDDER TO THINK** and **VANILLA TRAINWRECK.** Buffalo Tom formed at the University of Massachusetts, in Amherst, in 1986. They write infectious pop songs, then rough them up with feedback. The group recently released its third album, "Let Me Come Over." As for its live shows, bass player Chris Colburn once put it this way: "There's never a set list. We just play what we want."

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Intimate nineties glitter. For the next couple of months the club will be home to a Rodgers and Hammerstein rave-up called "A Grand Night for Singing." The cast includes some familiar faces from Broadway. Closed Mondays.

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small, red-gold-and-green cabaret. **ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY,** who will be here on March 7, is a fine singer-pianist who can imitate Billie Holiday and Marlene Dietrich, sing an E flat above high C, and say, without sounding immodest, "People often come up to me and ask why I'm not famous." Apart from a few requisite supper-club numbers, Callaway's catalogue includes her own songs, songs by lesser-known New York composers, and songs improvised around suggestions made by musically inclined patrons. **STEVE LUTVAK** is in on March 8.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut decorated with a fruit-and-bamboo motif and dedicated to such things as calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. The exuberant **MIGHTY SPARROW** comes in on March 6; **BOBBY SANABRIA** and **ASCENSION** are here on March 8; and, in a particularly intriguing booking, **BETTY CARTER** and **ABBEY LINCOLN** begin a two-day gig on March 9. The former is a terrific jazz and scat singer who breathes new life into standards. A typical Carter song contains a range of emotions, from heavy-lidded low notes to airy, vibratoless passages that bring to mind Chet Baker's trumpet. Dining.

STEVE MCGRAW'S, 158 W. 72nd St. (595-7400)—The dapper and very talented performer **BILL MC CAULEY** takes over the downstairs "piano room" here on March 5. He plays Fridays through Mondays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A pretty serious jazz shrine. A trio consisting of **CEDAR WALTON, RON CARTER,** and **BILLY HIGGINS** is here for a few weeks. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—In the heart of the heart of this legendary indoor-outdoor eatery is one of Manhattan's newer jazz spots, the Chestnut Room. Vocalist and pianist **DARYL SHERMAN** leads a quartet March 3-7; the **CHRIS CONNOR** quartet is here as of March 9. Closed Mondays.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, where the sight lines are above average. The Louisiana-based singer-accordionist **ZACHARY RICHARD** will do his joyous zydeco stomping here on March 4. Richard's songs are as whimsical as Lyle Lovett's and as wistful as Daniel Lanois's. His live performances—he's become a sort of regular here—provide as good an opportunity as Manhattanites are likely to get to do the Cajun two-step, although the singer's softer, more thoughtful side tends to get lost in all the shuffling. **SON SEALS** comes in March 5-6.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." **MARCUS ROBERTS,** who's a versatile and prolific pianist, as well as an insatiable student of jazz, leads a quartet here through March 7. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Wetlands is usually thought of as a Deadhead hangout, but the club has also been the launching pad for a generation of young New York bands like Blues Traveler and the Spin Doctors. **GOD STREET WINE** comes in on March 6. The pop-rock mischief-makers known as **TOO MUCH JOY** are here on March 7. The band sometimes seems more like a running gag than anything else—their songs are either hilarious or idiotic, or both—but when they're right, they're right.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

COMEDY DOUBLE BILL—Phyllis Yvonne Stickney in "An Evening with an Endangered Species," and Stephanie and Suzanne Jones in "The Jones Twins Do Bebop Muzak." (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-7100. March 4-5 at 8 and March 7 at 3.)

DAVID SEDARIS—With four others, in his play "Stump the Host." (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. March 4-6 at 10. Through March 13.)

"EVERYDAY NEWT BURMAN (THE TRILOGY OF CYCLIC-EXISTENCE)"—The most recent collaborative work by composer John Moran and the Ridge Theatre, a performance group. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. March 5-7 at 7:30. Through March 21.)

PENNY ARCADE—In her show "Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!" (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120. Fridays and Saturdays at 8.)

DUPLEX PLANET HOUR—David Greenberger delivers monologues from *Duplex Planet*, his magazine based on interviews with nursing-home residents; with music by Terry Adams. Also on the bill are Bob Neuwirth and Jeff Buckley. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. March 7 at 4.)

DIXON PLACE—A partial lineup: Ken Bullock's "My Life Is a Show," March 3 at 8; Alien Comic's "New Routines for the New Regime," March 5 at 10:30; Susan Jeremy in "I Have to Be Famous," about growing up on Long Island, March 6 at 10:30; and Bonnie Wiseman and others, March 9 at 8. (258 Bowery, at Houston St. 219-3088.)

ART

Not So Black-and-White

ROBERT COLESCOTT'S allegorical themes—the continents, the races, the history of art—are perfectly traditional, but his way of thinking about them is not. In his current show, for instance, of recent paintings and works on paper (Kind, 136 Greene Street; through March 27), along comes "The Scream (Georgia O'Keeffe in L.A.)," Colescott's profound screwball meditation on last year's Los Angeles riots. It is a painting composed of concentric bands of African-American figures crowded together form a halo of conflict above an unlikely cartoon image of the New Mexico recluse, in a pink negligee, frozen in the attitude of Munch's famous—and, these days, inflatable—shrieker.

Elsewhere, bumptious figures—black, white, and in between, representing Africa and the Americas—intermix, beget medium-toned peoples, and strike the attitudes of preëxisting masterpieces. Colescott at times reminds one of Peter Saul, the redoubtable Bay Area painter and satirist, except that he is much more elliptical—indeed, he's wholly unpredictable—and looser with the brush. Intense and even luridly imagistic as they sometimes are, the paintings possess a lyric abandon more typically identified with abstraction. The drawings downstairs are especially beautiful and ballad-like, full of vision and air: Colescott is a free-associating poet in paint.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Daumier Drawings," the first major exhibition devoted specifically to the drawings of Honoré Daumier, contains more than a hundred, revealing the development of his style from succinct, classic figure studies to satirical masterpieces. The show is rounded out by selected paintings, prints, and bronzes. Through May 2. . . . ¶ "Faces and Figures: German and Austrian Artists, 1918-33" consists entirely of Met-owned objects, including prints by Beckmann, Grosz, Kokoschka, and Dix, and photographs by Raoul Hausmann, John Heartfield, and August Sander. . . . ¶ The third-century works in "Loma Negra, A Peruvian Lord's Tomb" range from small gilt nose and ear ornaments to large headdresses and masks. . . . ¶ An installation of works from the museum's large collection of Italian majolica and Venetian glass. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Satu day evenings until 8:45.)

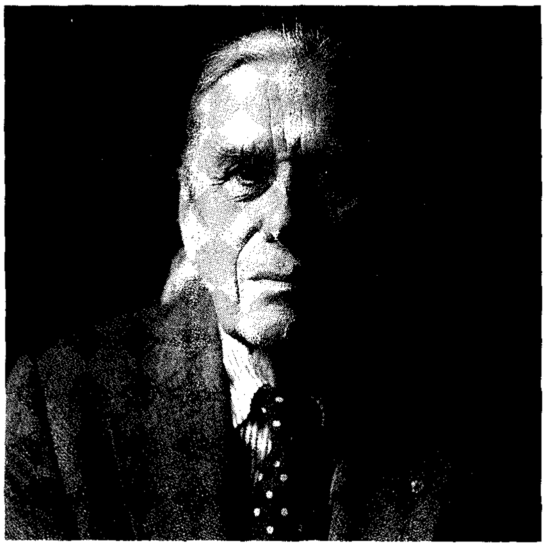
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Thinking Is Form: The Drawings of Joseph Beuys." Approximately two hundred works, in several mediums, including pencil, watercolor, oil, collage, and chalk on blackboard. Through May 4. . . . ¶ "Recent Acquisitions: Photography" presents some thirty works—by Robert Rauschenberg, Cindy Sherman, and Doug and Mike Starn—that reflect the diversity of the museum's collection. Through April 6. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"AMERICA Invention," a new work by Lothar Baumgarten. The walls of the large rotunda, from the skylight to the ground and back up again, are inscribed with the Westernized names for Native American societies from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. Through March 7. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—This year's Biennial is emphasizing issues of "identity, sexuality, allegiance, and our relationship to technology." Ida Applebroog, Nan Goldin, Spike Lee, and Cindy Sherman are among the more than eighty American artists featured. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Fancy Feet: A Historic Collection of Ladies' Footwear" presents a socio-historic perspective on high heels, slippers, boots, and mules and demonstrates how shoe design often reflects the times. The exhibit ranges from the sixteenth century (a pair of Italian platforms known as *chopines)* through the twentieth (Charles Jourdan's 1965 version of the patent-leather slingback). (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"The Power of Maps" includes such wonderful objects as a Mesopotamian clay tablet; a navigation chart from the Marshall Islands; and a *lukasa,* a map made of wood, beads, and metal, used by a secret society of the Luba people of Zaire. There are maps here that track the transmission of plagues and maps that chart the ozone hole over Antarctica. There is even a display showing the inside of a map-lover's glove compartment. But so much effort has gone into proving that maps can be fun that much of the fun has been stripped away. Perhaps more could have been left to the imagination by creatively juxtaposing the material and letting museumgoers figure it all out themselves. Through March 7. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)



Paul Cadmus at Midtown-Payson.

ick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—A permanent installation of blue-and-white Chinese porcelain, dating from the fifteenth century to the early nineteenth. . . . ¶ Furniture from the French Renaissance, along with Old Master prints and drawings. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—Thomas Jefferson's first published work, "Summary View of the Rights of America" (1774), and a copy of the first printing of the Declaration of Independence. Through April 18. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Secrecy: African Art That Conceals and Reveals," the museum's inaugural exhibition in its new space, includes masks, figures, textiles, initiatory objects, and reliquaries. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 11 to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Assault on the Arts: Culture and Politics in Nazi Germany" brings together assorted materials that illustrate the deleterious effects on art of the Nazi regime. Through May 28. . . . ¶ "Christian Boltanski: Books, Prints, Printed Matter, Ephemera" showcases the bleak oeuvre of this leading French Conceptualist. Through May 15. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 7:30; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Short List—nancy fried and bryn james, Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through March 27); **jerry kearns,** Kent, 47 E. 63rd St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through March 5); **robert motherwell,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through March 11); **julian schnabel,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through March 6).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

"Paul Cadmus: The Artist as Subject"—Last year at this gallery, Paul Cadmus, realist painter and egg-tempera man, was given a retrospective. Now Cadmus's own face and physique—perhaps even handsomer today than in the artist's notoriously comely youth—are the main focus of an exhibition of paintings, drawings, and photographs, by Jared French, George Tooker, Chuck Close, George Platt Lynes, Luigi Lucioni, Duane Michals, and Bruce Weber, as well as by Cadmus himself. It's a greatly entertaining show, full of (American) Bright Young Things, theatrical whimsies, comic grand airs, and beach tableaux in the form of photographs taken on Fire Island in the nineteen-thirties and forties. There's a 1943 Lynes portrait of Cadmus with Lillian Gish, in the roles of Numa Pompilius and his wife, Egeria, that should warm the hearts of the stagestruck everywhere. An Isadora Duncanish atmosphere of free love and freethinking seems to pervade Cadmus's inner circle, which includes—among various other objects of affection, past and present—his sister, Fidelma, who is married to Lincoln Kirstein, and the painter Margaret French, who is married to Jared. Through March 6. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Short List—robert cottingham, Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 20); **arthur g. dove,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 13); **minnie evans,** Ross, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 6); **helen frankenthaler** and **robert caracciolo,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 20); **catherine lee,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through March 27); **medrie macphee,** Baldacci-Daverio, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 13); **juan muñoz** and **thomas struth,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through March 20); **lucio pozzi** and **jane rosen,** Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through March 13); **arnulf rainer,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through March 20); **harold reddicliffe,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 20); **harry roseman,** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (through March 27); **antonio tapies,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through March 20); **timothy woodman,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through March 20).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Chris Burden—If you didn't make it to the wilds of Brooklyn last year to see Burden's

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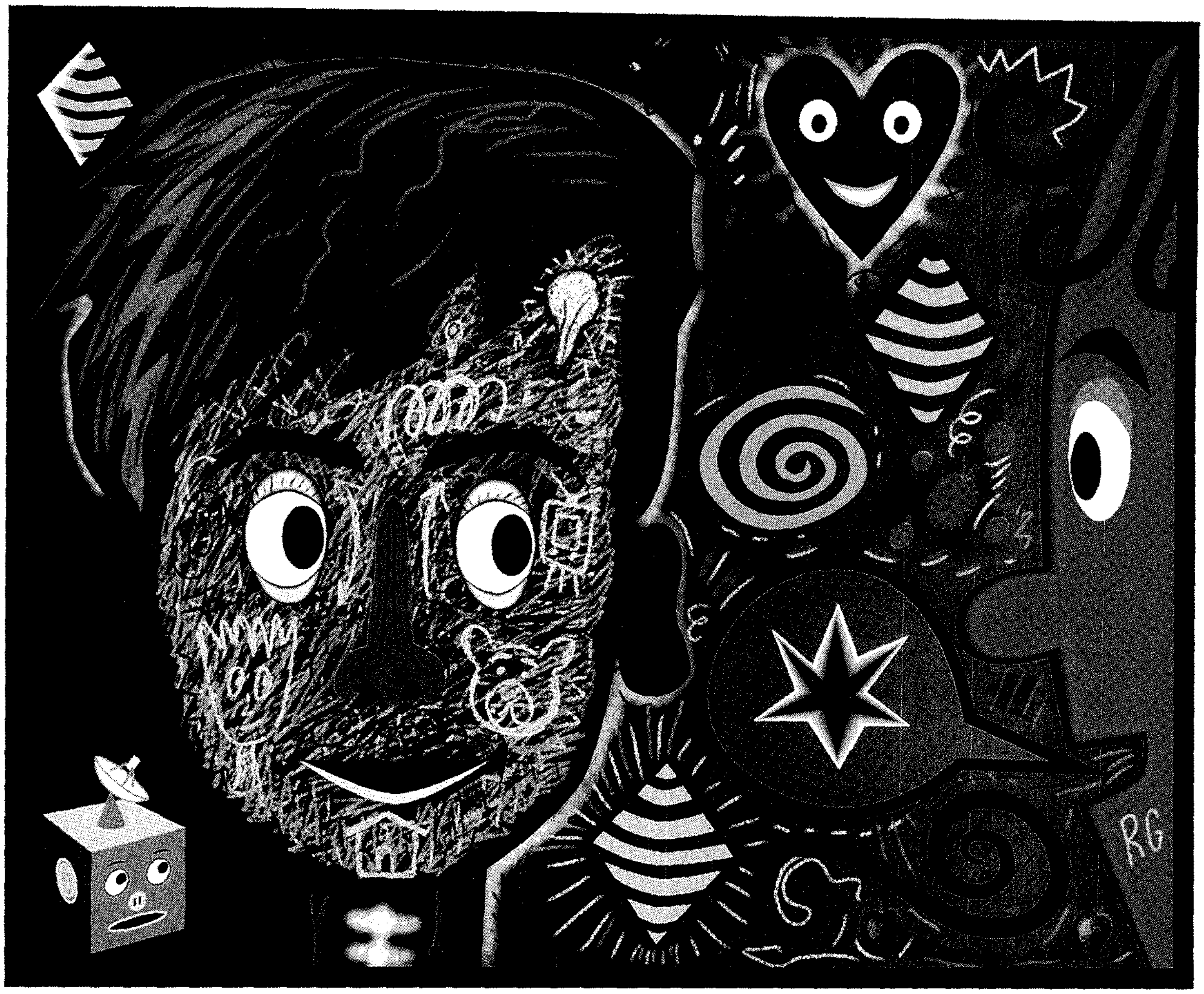

Self-portrait by Rodney Alan Greenblat.

five-ton "Medusa's Head," here is another opportunity. Through March 6. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Robert Cumming—Meticulous multimedia constructions packed with notions of the itinerant artist. There are many inventive elements, including a stick, derived from something the artist calls the "Cray girl game," which he mutates into a large pair of scissors. Through March 6. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

Steve Gianakos—Through the years, Gianakos's humor has been slipping straight into tragedy, and these new "printed paintings"—all rendered on glued, distressed paper—are among his most tragic yet. The subject of each work is a Cubist sort of woman—her rearranged face or body battered by the manipulations of modernism—either descending a staircase, or lying in a hospital bed with her legs monstrously outstretched or her nose severely out of joint. The havoc of a sexually aggressive Picasso is everywhere, but Gianakos also makes a grisly link between art and politics, with various women getting nooky with that arch-subverter of aesthetic spectacle, Adolf Hitler. Through March 27. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Rodney Alan Greenblat—This veteran East Village artist's work is so spirited and good-natured that it seems mean to point out the perennial childishness, the endlessly decorative vapidity, in paintings and objects that, even at their most ambitious, have seemed at home only in Pee-wee's playhouse. This shortcoming is in ample evidence in the new "electrostatic plotterprints" and computer-generated Cibachromes in the current show. The good news is that Greenblat has finally found the perfect match between art and audience in the computer programs he has designed for four-to-seven-year-olds. They are a dazzling kind of visual entertainment likely to titillate the child in even the most grownup gallerygoer. The various programs are highly inventive and feature all sorts of games and stories, including a hilarious animated narrative of the mating cycle of the "tooli bug." There is also a game called Technoweenie. Through March 13. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

Franz West—This show centers on a series of attractive Oldenburg-like sculptures that fall somewhere between toy and weapon. There are also two videotapes, one pretentious (full of art babble), the other playful (in which a Senegalese street vender treats a West sculpture as a toy). Artists all over the world are engaged in challenging the seriousness of art, but few go about it with as much enjoyment and as little condescension as West. Through March 17. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St.)

"Confessional"—An entertaining show of new works by eight young artists. Of special interest are Cheryl Donegan's videotape of a woman having a cosmic sexual experience with a nurturing container of milk; Sean Landers' epic drawing of sin, sex, and himself; and Joe Scanlan's endlessly patched denim jacket, in which he seems to have taken quite literally the old adage about idle hands. Through March 6. (Koury, 89 Greene St.)

Group Show—This gallery has consistently presented some of the most interesting exhibition programs in recent years, the sorts of things one used to expect from alternative spaces. This is a show of works in various mediums by unknown artists; despite the fact that much of it seems unformed, it is worth a look. Of special interest is an appended work, "Rock My Religion," a videotape by the more established Dan Graham. Through March 6. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Short List—**VITO ACCONCI,** 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. (through March 20); **ALICE AYCOCK,** Weber, 142 Greene St. (through March 13); **FORREST BESS** and **JOHN LEES,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 420 West Broadway (through March 20); **JOSEPH BEUYS,** Gibson, 568 Broadway (through April 3); **TONY BEVAN,** Louver, 130 Prince St. (through March 20); **CAROLYN BRADY,** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway (through March 13); **SOPHIE CALLE,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through March 6); **LINDA DANIELS,** Freire, 130 Prince St. (through March 20); **SONIA DELAUNAY,** Zarre, 154 Wooster St. (through March 6); **MARIO DELLAVEDOVA,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through March 13); **CARROLL DUNHAM,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through March 20); **ROBERT GROSVENOR,** Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through March 27); **ROBERT HARMS,** Klarfeld Perry, 472 Broome St. (through March 27); **JENE HIGHSTEIN,** Klein, 594 Broadway (through May 9); **JAMES HYDE,** Good, 532 Broadway (through March 12); **DAVID LASRY,** Auchincloss, 558 Broadway (through March 10); **MILA MACEK,** Ala, 560 Broadway (through March 10); **DAVID RABINOWITCH,** Flynn, 113 Crosby St. (through April 30); **LUCAS SAMARAS,** Pace, 142 Greene St. (through March 20); **JUDITH SHEA,** Protech, 560 Broadway (through March 20); **NOT VITAL,** Wooster Gardens, 40 Wooster St. (through April 3); **ROBIN WINTERS,** Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through March 20).

PHOTOGRAPHY

German Lessons

In less than a year, the Guggenheim Museum has gone from an institution with a decidedly musty aura to a veritable hot spot on the contemporary-art map, with so much ambition that it has some art-world types cheering and others sounding alerts about megalomania. Obviously, this is a museum—or, rather, a museum conglomerate—that not only talks big but shows big, as is made clear by "Photography in Contemporary German Art: 1960 to the Present," at the SoHo branch of the Guggenheim (575 Broadway; through May 9). There's a reason that the press rushed to cover this exhibition when it first opened a couple of weeks ago: the show doesn't just acknowledge but actually pursues photography's symbiosis with painting, with sculpture, and with architecture—connections that are usually kept in the background by most other museums' curatorial approaches.

Here one can see the uses made of photography by some of the biggest stars of German art, as well as by some who will be new names for many Americans. There's Conceptual work, straightforward work, and everything in between, from Pop to kitsch to images reflecting the postwar fixation by German artists on their national identity. If you feel overwhelmed, you can regain your equilibrium from the modest but powerful imagery of Gerhard Richter. Some of his snapshots of brushstrokes are so good they make you eager for more.

Diana Michener—The two groups of work on view—one of the heads of newly slaughtered cows, the other of deformed fetuses, a number of them Siamese twins preserved in formaldehyde—combine education and emotion in remarkable ways. Michener has chosen subjects that, in another's hands, could easily stimulate horror or numbness; instead, she stimulates one to really look at her pictures. Through March 6. (Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Martin Munkacsi—Munkacsi's pictures of creatures in motion—dancing, racing, driving, flying—seem to shave instants down to the nanosecond while framing his subjects in a way that magnifies their formal splendor. Through March 6. (Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon until 8; Saturdays 10 to 5.)

Short List—**LEWIS BALTZ,** Borden, 560 Broadway (through March 20); **FLOR GARDUÑO,** Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. (open daily, except Mondays, noon to 6, through March 7); **EMIL HEILBORN,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. (through April 10); **MARK KLETT,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through March 6); **JOHN STEWART,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through March 13); **JOYCE TENNESON** and **PHYLLIS GALEMBO,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through March 28); **ROMAN VISHNIAC,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through April 18).

MUSIC

The Rare Purcell

Some wonderful composers are bound to their times—"dated," we say, when their times have fallen out of favor—and some have a strangeness and modernity that are perpetual. Henry Purcell is one of the latter. The majesty of God, the torments of love, and the comedy of human life were subjects to which he could set a confident hand. His mastery of musical craftsmanship, at the point to which it had developed in his day, was nearly absolute, and he had the master's way of mysteriously stepping outside craft under the right flow of inspiration. No early death (save possibly Bizet's) more impoverished the history of dramatic music. One consolation for the operas Purcell did not live to write is the wealth of sacred music he left behind, in which he found so much restrained, interior drama.

It used to be said that Purcell (d. 1695) was the last great English composer before Benjamin Britten, nearly three centuries later. Serious exposure to masters like John Eccles (whose "Semele," of 1707, was given an important revival earlier this year by the Mannes Camerata) and reëvaluation at a proper distance of Edward Elgar will surely in time liberate Purcell from this rather forlorn iconic status and permit his reputation to rest fully on his actual production. Purcell concerts are rarities; Louise Basbas and her colleagues in the Music Before 1800 series, at Corpus Christi Church, will grant New York one, composed of songs and anthems, on Sunday afternoon, March 7.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA** and **PAGLIACCI,** with Waltraud Meier, Bruno Beccaria, and Timothy Noble in the former, and Barbara Daniels, Vladimir Atlantov, and Juan Pons in the latter; conducted by Nello Santi. (March 3 at 8 and March 6 at 8:30.). . . **DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE,** with Kathleen Battle, Elizabeth Carter, Peter Seiffert, Manfred Hemm, and Eric Halfvarson; Donald Runnicles. (March 4 and March 8 at 8.). . . **DER ROSENKAVALIER,** with Mechthild Gessendorf, Susan Quittmeyer, Heidi Grant Murphy, and Eric Halfvarson; Christian Thielemann. (March 5 at 7:30.). . . **LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST,** with Ghena Dimitrova, Nicola Martinucci, and Alain Fondary; Christian Badea. (March 6 at 1:30 and March 9 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

American Chamber Opera Company—A double bill of chamber operas: Alec Wilder's "The Truth About Windmills" (in its New York première) and Holst's "Savitri" (derived from an episode in the "Mahabharata"). (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. March 5-6 at 8. For information about tickets, call 781-0857.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "Don Giovanni." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bow-

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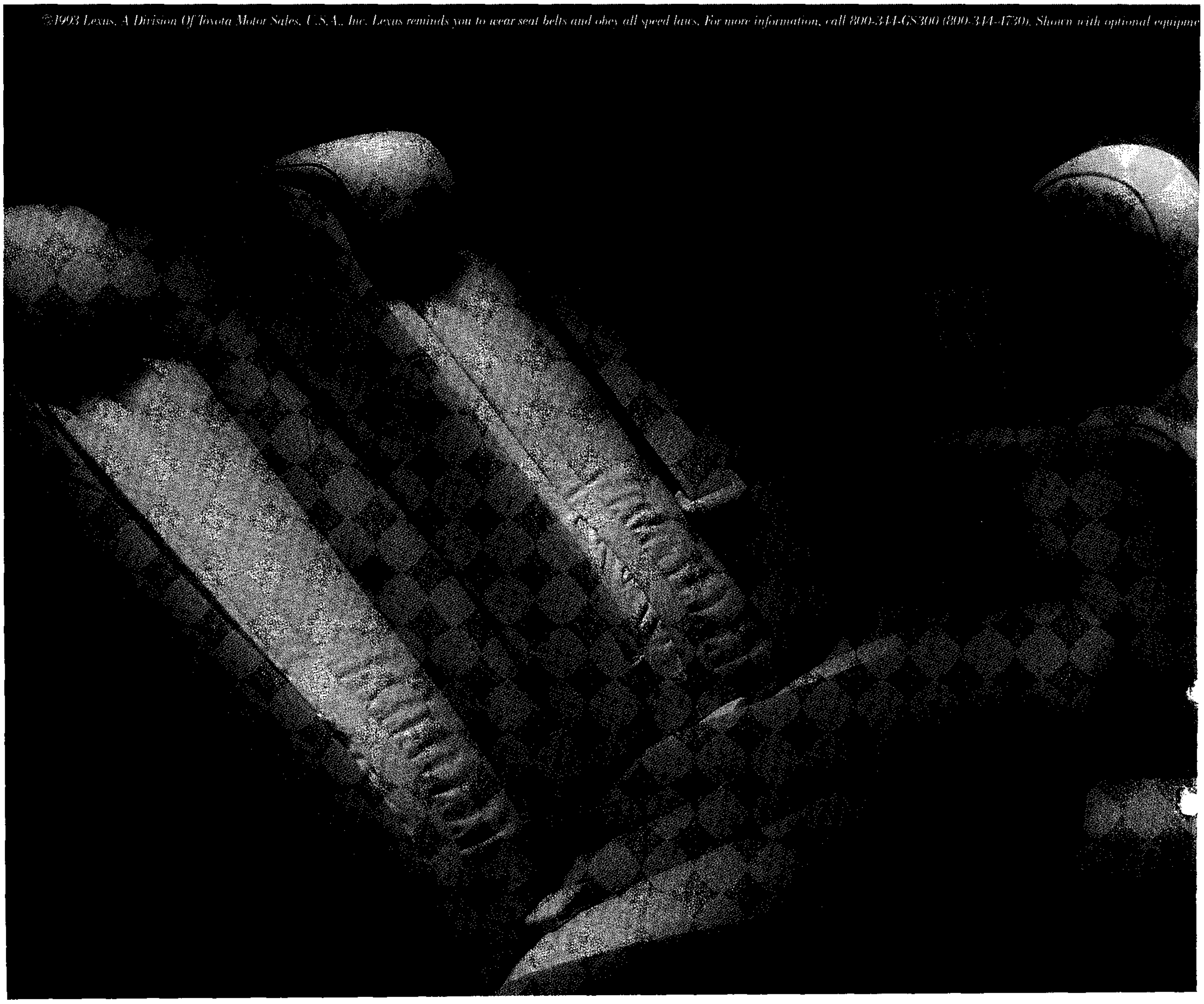

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ery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. March 6 at 7:30 and March 7 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Oliver Knussen conducts the première of his "Flourish with Fireworks" and "Whitman Settings" (the latter featuring soprano Lucy Shelton), as well as Busoni's "Berceuse Elégiaque" and Stravinsky's "Le Baiser de la Fée." (Avery Fisher Hall. March 4 and March 6 at 8, and March 5 at 2.)

Cracow Philharmonic—Gilbert Levine conducts the New York première of Górecki's "Three Pieces in Old Style," Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Janina Fialkowska), and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 3 (the "Polish"); a benefit concert, the proceeds of which will help rebuild the orchestra's home-town concert hall, which went up in flames (along with its entire music library) last year. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 3 at 8.)

Musica Sacra—Richard Westenburg directs a half dozen pieces by Britten and two works by Robert Convery: "Springsong of the Earth" (to a text derived from Joyce's "Ulysses," with a solo flute part here rendered by Renée Krimsier) and "A Requiem Lullaby in the Time of AIDS." (Alice Tully Hall. March 3 at 8.)

Westchester Symphony—Anthony Aibel conducts David Diamond's Concerto for Small Orchestra, Brahms' D-Major Serenade, and arias by Mozart and Bernstein (featuring soprano Tomoko Shibata). (Alice Tully Hall. March 5 at 8.)

Brooklyn Philharmonic—Jan Krenz conducts Beethoven's Violin Concerto (featuring Cho-Liang Lin) and Witold Lutoslawski's ten-year-old Symphony No. 3. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. March 5-6 at 8.)

Music Before 1800—An all-Purcell concert, in which Louise Basbas will direct the Choir of Corpus Christi Church in sacred works and soloists will offer songs of a generally spiritual bent. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-0675. March 7 at 4.)

Moscow Synagogue Chorus—Misha Touretsky directs traditional liturgical music, folk songs, and—mirabile dictu—selections from "Fiddler on the Roof." (Merkin Concert Hall. March 7 at 7.)

Collegiate Chorale—Robert Bass directs the chorus and orchestra in Mozart's Requiem and Vaughan Williams' Magnificat and "Five Mystical Songs"; with soloists Esther Hinds (soprano), Bonnie Bradley (mezzo-soprano), David Gordon (tenor), and Kevin McMillan (baritone). A benefit concert. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 8 at 8.)

San Francisco Symphony—At Carnegie Hall, Herbert Blomstedt conducting. March 8 at 8: Performing Copland's "Appalachian Spring" and Bruckner's Symphony No. 4. . . . ¶ March 9 at 8: Dukas's "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," the New York première of John Harbison's Oboe Concerto (featuring the orchestra's principal oboist, William Bennett), Sibelius's Symphony No. 7, and Stravinsky's "Firebird" Suite (1919).

RECITALS

Abbey Simon—The distinguished pianist will perform Schumann's "Kreisleriana," Brahms' "Variations on a Theme by Paganini," Ravel's "Gaspard de la Nuit," and Prokofiev's Toccata—and you can bet that a strikingly large percentage of the seats will be occupied by fellow-pianists who would sooner play Liszt on a spinet than miss Simon's annual recital. (Carnegie Hall. March 3 at 8.)

Composers String Quartet and Evelyne Crochet—The ensemble is joined by the pianist (and several other guests) in an all-Brahms program: the C-Minor Piano Quartet, String Sextet No. 1, and G-Major String Quartet. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 3 at 8.)

Emanuele Segre—Classical guitarist, playing works by Sor, Henze, Giuliani, and many others. (Weill Recital Hall. March 3 at 8.)

Philip Bush—Performing works by Sweelinck, Beethoven, David First, Sorrel Hays, and Ben Johnston, using a piano (and other keyboard instruments) pitched at tunings that differ from standard modern temperaments. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 3 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Emma Tahmizian performs a suite (arranged for piano) from Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet"; Mark Peskanov joins her for Schubert's A-Major Violin Sonata; and cellist Fred Sherry completes the ensemble for Beethoven's "Archduke" Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. March 4 at 7:30 and March 7 at 4.)

Pavel Nersessian—In his New York début recital, the Russian pianist performs music from his homeland by Medtner (his "Canzona Serenata" from "Motifs Oubliés"), Shostakovich (Sonata No. 1), Rachmaninoff ("Variations on a Theme of Corelli"), and Tchaikovsky ("The Seasons"). (Alice Tully Hall. March 4 at 8.)

Harolyn Blackwell—The soprano's recital will include songs by Purcell, Rachmaninoff, and Strauss, as well as the New York première of Ricky Ian Gordon's "Genius Child," a song cycle based on poems by Langston Hughes. (Weill Recital Hall. March 5 at 8.)

James Graseck—You've quite possibly heard him in less acoustically enriching settings. He's the smiling, blond, boyish violinist who is widely acknowledged as the crème de la crème of subway musicians, a Juilliard grad (master's degree, no less) whose aspirations led him to a career down under, in the realm of the I.R.T., B.M.T., and IND. His Carnegie Hall début recital will involve much of the repertoire for which he is acclaimed—morsels by Sarasate, Paganini, Saint-Saëns, and others—and one imagines that the occasional subterranean rumble that the R-train graciously shares with the hall's audiences will provide a reassuring underpinning. (Carnegie Hall. March 5 at 8.)

Tokyo String Quartet—The ensemble concludes its traversal of Bartók's quartets by playing the even-numbered ones. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 5 at 8.)

Mark Kramer and Lionel Party—The viola da gambist and the harpsichordist play works by seventeenth-century composers Louis Couperin, Tobias Hume, and others. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. March 5 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

S.E.M. Ensemble—Two programs from a group dedicated to "post-Cagean" music. March 5 at 8: A performance inspired by FLUXUS, a cross-cultural aesthetic movement that, in the nineteen-sixties, emerged as an international harbinger of performance art; with guest artists Nam June Paik, Takehisa Kosugi, and Yasunao Tone. . . . ¶ March 6 at 8: David Tudor plays the première of his "Neural Synthesis (No. 2)," performing on a Neural Network Audio Synthesizer. (Willow Place Auditorium, 26 Willow Pl., between Joralemon and State Sts., Brooklyn. For information about tickets, call 1-718 488-7659.)

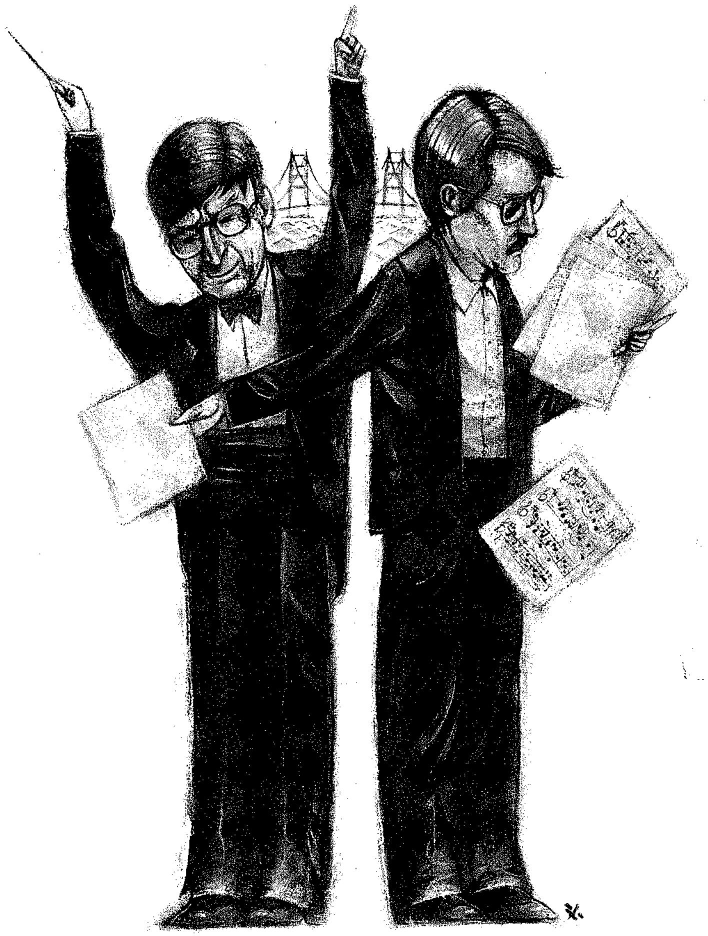
Lisa Kozenko—In her New York début recital, the oboist performs the première of Judith Lang Zaimont's "Doubles for Oboe and Piano," as well as sonatas by Giuseppe Sammartini, Dutilleux, and Poulenc and shorter works by Robert Schumann and John Harbison; assisted by pianist Dana Burnett (who will take a solo turn in several pieces by Clara Schumann). (Weill Recital Hall. March 6 at 5:30.)

Shanghai String Quartet and Ruth Laredo—The foursome performs Haydn's Quartet in B-Flat (Op. 76, No. 4) and Brahms' C-Minor Piano Quartet (the latter with Ms. Laredo, who will offer a commentary about both works). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 6 at 7.)

Sylvan Winds—Performing Barber's "Summer Music" and (with the assistance of the Guarneri Quartet) Britten's Sinfonietta and Brahms' D-Major Serenade. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 6 at 7:30.)

Maurizio Pollini—In the first of two New York recitals this month, the eminent pianist performs sonatas by Schubert (in G Major, D. 894) and Beethoven (in F-Sharp Major, Op. 78, and in F Minor, Op. 57). (Carnegie Hall. March 7 at 3.)

André Watts—The pianist performs works by Mozart, Schubert (including his A-Minor Sonata, D. 784), Chopin (including the F-Minor Fantaisie), Janaček (his Sonata "I. X. 1905"), Berio, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 7 at 3.)



Herbert Blomstedt and John Harbison, conductor and composer, with the San Francisco Symphony, at Carnegie Hall.

Verdehr Trio—New York premières of works for clarinet, violin, and piano. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 7 at 3.)

Joel Krosnick and Gilbert Kalish—The intrepid cello-and-piano team traces what they view as the "Romantic spirit" of music from the nineteenth century (by Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, Chopin, Franck, and Reger) through the twentieth (by Fauré and Messiaen), including, in the evening installment, the première of a trio by Ralph Shapey (in which violinist Joel Smirnoff will assist). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 7 at 3 and 7:30, with a single ticket good for both halves.)

Vinland Ensemble—Presenting vocal and instrumental chamber music by Schubert, Niels Gade, and Grieg. (Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims, 75 Hicks St., Brooklyn. March 7 at 4. No tickets necessary.)

New York Festival of Song—Mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt, baritone Christopher Trakas, and pianists Steven Blier and Michael Barrett perform Spanish (or allegedly Spanish) love songs by Germans, Frenchmen, and Spaniards. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. March 8 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Fischer Duo—Cellist Norman Fischer and pianist Jeanne Kierman perform the New York premières of George Rochberg's "Sonata-Aria" and Augusta Read Thomas's "Chant" (both of which the duo commissioned), in addition to Carter's Cello Sonata and Bolcom's "Capriccio." (Merkin Concert Hall. March 8 at 8.)

Aston Magna—Johann Sebastian Bach's final masterpiece, "The Art of Fugue," comprises a series of canons and fugues—he called the latter "contrapuncti"—that work out the musical possibilities of a single subject in a dazzling variety of solutions. At the spot in the manuscript where the last piece breaks off in mid-phrase, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (the composer's son, who completed editing the collection and gave it its title) inscribed "during the composition of this fugue. . .the author died," thereby delineating what has come down as the most heartrending conclusion in all of music. (Recent scholarship argues, however, that Bach may have finished—or very nearly finished—the movement in question, and that the abrupt cut-off belongs to nothing more than a sketch for a quadruple fugue whose ending has been lost.) Bach may not have thought of his collection in terms of performance; in any case, he didn't specify what combination of instruments he envisioned. So when six musicians (strings, winds, and harpsichord) from the Aston Magna institute (a hotbed of historically informed performance) play it, they will use a realization by their violinist, Daniel Stepner. The trio sonata from Bach's "Musical Offering" rounds out the program. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 9 at 8.)

North Carolina School of the Arts Chamber Players—Faculty members from the noted arts school, plus guests familiar to those who follow New York's contemporary-music scene, perform the première of a Horn Trio by Andrew Mead, in addition to works by Davidovsky, Normand Lockwood, George Walker, and Robert Hall Lewis. Presented by the League/I.S.C.M. (Weill Recital Hall. March 9 at 8.)

bal Trio—Performing chamber music for soprano, flute, and harp (or combinations thereof), including premières of works by Leo Kraft and Peter Schickele. (Alice Tully Hall. March 9 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Barry Manilow—Often dismissed as a two-word joke, Barry Manilow is that and more: a walking, talking, belting, tear-wringing compendium of fabulousness. He is responsible for the hit versions of "Mandy," "I Write the Songs," and "Trying to Get the Feeling," as well as for co-producing Bette Midler's

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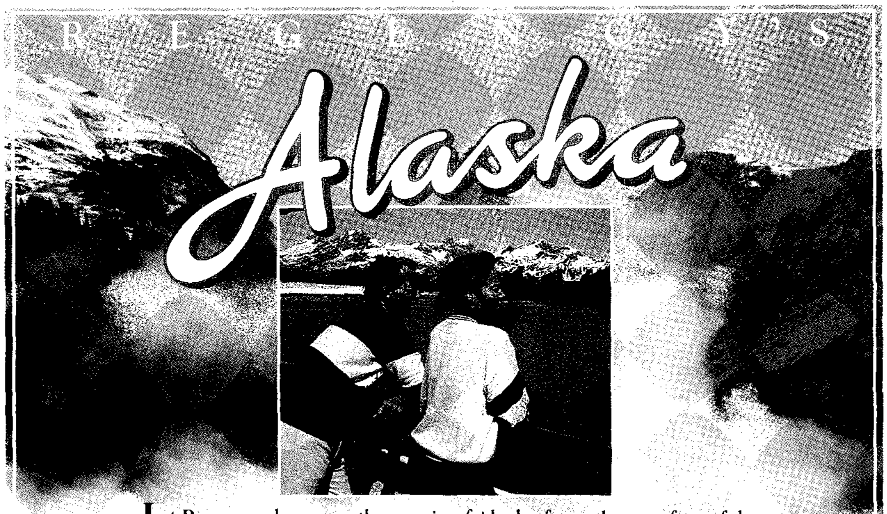

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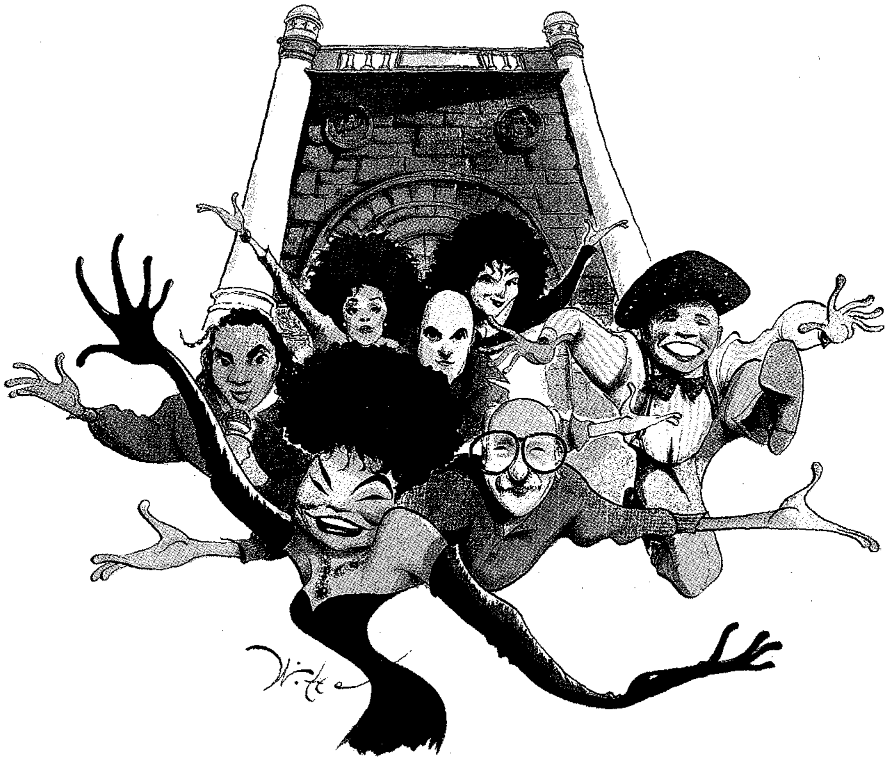

"Fifty Years of Fame," at LaGuardia Concert Hall.

ineffable first album and composing classic seventies jingles for McDonald's ("You deserve a break today. . .") and State Farm Insurance ("Just like a good neighbor, State Farm is there. . ."). And now he is an honorary Friend of Bill, having opened the Presidential Inaugural Gala with his colossal patriotic paean "Let Freedom Ring." This engagement kicks off a world tour that dispenses with medleys and instead features full performances of the many hits of this glittering son of Williamsburg, Brooklyn. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. March 3-5 at 8 and March 6 at 7:30.)

Don Byron—The wide-ranging and sterling jazz clarinettist Don Byron, fresh from his appearances on two wonderful 1992 albums (Hal Willner's tribute to Charles Mingus, "Weird Nightmare," and his own "Tuskegee Experiments"), is presenting a program called "Don Byron Plays Stephen Sondheim and Don Byron." He is a fierce and imaginative soloist, and his interest in classical music and klezmer complements his solid jazz chops in unexpected and effective ways. You can count on him to take the emotions of Sondheim's melodies to new places. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. March 6 at 8.)

"The Musical World of Tito Puente"—The Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, led by Jon Faddis, with Mr. Puente and members of his band, as well as Paquito D'Rivera. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 4 at 8.)

"New Sounds Live"—Tenor Thomas Bogdan and pianist Harry Huff perform works by Robert Moran (including the première of "Three Baroque Songs"), the Scott Johnson Ensemble does compositions by Mr. Johnson, and pianist Margaret Leng Tan plays Philip Glass's "How Now." (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. March 5 at 8.)

Connie Crothers and Richard Tabnik—Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. March 5 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Billy Childs Quartet—Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 5 at 8.

New York Buenos Aires Connection—Humphrey gallery, 594 Broadway. March 5-6 at 8. For reservations, which are required, call 226-5360.

The Fureys—With the Dolores Keane band. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 6 at 8.)

Music of Vietnam—Ngoc Lam and Que Lam. (Uris Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 81st St. March 7 at 2:30. For information about tickets, call 545-7536.)

"Lyrics & Lyricists"—The third in this season's series of five programs salutes Johnny Mercer. With Margaret Whiting (narrator), Priscilla Baskerville, Mark Coffin, Wayne Hasford, Lynn Roberts, Ty Stephens, and Tex Arnold (musical director). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 7 at 2:30 and 8 and March 8 at 2 and 8.)

The Roches—With Deborah Harry and Joey Arias, in a benefit for the Wooster Group. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. March 7 at 8. For information about tickets, call 966-3651.)

"Fifty Years of Fame"—Another benefit concert/performance, this one for LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts. Participants include Savion Glover, Eartha Kitt, Melissa Manchester, Ben Vereen, and members of the cast of the 1980 movie "Fame." (LaGuardia Concert Hall, Amsterdam Ave. at 65th St. March 8 at 8. For information about tickets, call 714-7198.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Knicks—Vs. the Utah Jazz, March 4 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Orlando Magic, March 8 at 8.

Nets—Vs. the Orlando Magic, March 4. . . . ¶ Vs. the Denver Nuggets, March 6. (Game time, 7:30.)

Rangers—Vs. the Buffalo Sabres, March 3. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, March 5. . . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Kings, March 9. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, March 9 at 7:35.

Devils—Vs. the Chicago Black Hawks, March 5 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, March 7 at 5:05.

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

I Don't Wanna Hear It—PEN American Center will bring together a formidable roster, including Frances FitzGerald, Barney Frank, Peggy Noonan, and Morley Safer, to discuss whether the rights of those whose speech one finds reprehensible should be protected. (New York University Law School, Vanderbilt Hall, 40 Washington Square S. March 4 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Bloomsday—A greenhouse visit for vegetable gardeners, as part of "Making Brooklyn Bloom." There will also be free workshops and demonstrations. (Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., near Grand Army Plaza. March 7, from 12:30 to 4. Workshop registration, which is necessary, will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis.)

Sappy—It's maple-sugar time at the New York Botanical Garden. The day's festivities include a tour of the Garden's twenty-two species of maple trees and tree-tapping for sap to make syrup. (Bronx Park. March 7, from 1 to 4. No tickets necessary.)

Cathouse—The International Cat Show is back in town, with some thousand cats competing in a variety of classes. There will also be exhibition cats, including the ragdoll and the longhair munchkin; contests for "amateur" cats; veterinarians speaking about cat care; and an astrologer giving readings of the cats on parade. Best-in-show will be awarded at about 5:30 on Sunday. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. March 5, from 3 to 9, and March 6-7, from 9 to 6.)

Oo-La-La—An exhibit celebrating fifty years of Vidal Sassoon's hair innovations. (Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. March 3-5, from noon to 8, and March 6, from 10 to 5. No tickets necessary.)

Exposed—The fifteenth annual Artexpo will include work ranging from animation stills to contemporary Russian painting. More than four hundred galleries from around the world will participate. (Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. between 34th and 39th Sts. March 6-7, from 11 to 6, and March 8, from 10 to 2. Tickets at the door on the days of the event.)

Broken Hearts—In "Fifty Ways," several writers will read poems and prose about lovers' breakups. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. March 5 at 10:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Readings—March 3 at 7: Brooks Haxton will read from his own poetry and will introduce emerging poets Kimiko Hahn and Laura Kasischke. (Poetry Society of America, 15 Gramercy Park S. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ March 5 at 7: Grace Paley will read from her own work. (New York University, Casa Italiana, 24 W. 12th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ March 8 at 8:15: Charles Bernstein, Clark Coolidge, and Susan Howe will read from their own poetry. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.). . . ¶ March 9 at 8: Rosario Ferré, Julio Marzán, and Ed Vega will read from their own work and will discuss Puerto Rican writing. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Talks—March 3 at 6: *New Republic* editor Andrew Sullivan will talk about his work. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.). . . ¶ March 4 at 7: Paul Auster, Deirdre Bair, and Clark Coolidge will discuss Samuel Beckett's poetry. (Poets House, 72 Spring St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ March 4 at 8: Elie Wiesel will talk about contemporary values. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.). . . ¶ March 9 at 6: Blanche Wiesen Cook will talk about her biography of Eleanor Roosevelt. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.)

Tours—March 6 at 10: The Municipal Art Society is offering an all-day visit to the Bronx. For more information, call 439-1049. . . . ¶ March 6 at noon and 2:30: Two excursions to Governors Island; sponsored by Big Onion Walking Tours. For more information, call 439-1090.

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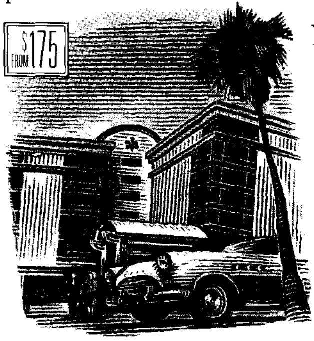

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 28.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Enchanted April" (directed by Mike Newell).
Theatre 2: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 3: "Mac" (†).
Theatre 4: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 5: "Like Water for Chocolate" (†).
Theatre 6: "Bad Lieutenant" (Abel Ferrara).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Modigliani" (1957, Jacques Becker; in French).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Sommersby" (Jon Amiel).
Theatre 2: "Passion Fish" (†).
Theatre 3: Through March 4: "Dead Alive" (Peter Jackson). From March 5: "Best of the Best 2" (Robert Radler).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "El Mariachi" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Abyss" (1989, James Cameron).
Theatre 3: "Falling Down" (†).
Theatre 4: "A Few Good Men" (Rob Reiner).
Theatre 5: "Damage" (Louis Malle).
Theatre 6: "Falling Down" (†).
Theatre 7: "Groundhog Day" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through March 4: "The Player" (Robert Altman), with Tim Robbins.
From March 5: "Close to Eden" (Nikita Mikhalkov, in Russian).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "The Last Days of Chez Nous" (†).
Theatre 2: Through March 4: "Love Field" (†). From March 5: "Swing Kids" (Thomas Carter).
Theatre 3: "A Few Good Men" (Rob Reiner).
Theatre 4: "Aladdin," an animated film.
Theatre 5: "Howards End" (James Ivory).
Theatre 6: "Unforgiven" (†).
Theatre 7: Through March 4: "The Cemetery Club" (Bill Duke). From March 5: "Amos & Andrew" (†).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Sniper" (Luis Llosa).
Theatre 2: Through March 4: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1" (Gene Quintano). From March 5: "Amos & Andrew" (†).
Theatre 3: Through March 4: "The Temp" (†). From March 5: "Swing Kids" (Thomas Carter).
Theatre 4: "Sommersby" (Jon Amiel).
Theatre 5: "A River Runs Through It" (Robert Redford).
Theatre 6: "Unforgiven" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Peter's Friends" (Kenneth Branagh); and "Flirting" (John Duigan).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through March 4: "Army of Darkness" (†).
From March 5: "Amos & Andrew" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey" (Duwayne Dunham).
Theatre 2: Through March 4: "The Cemetery Club" (Bill Duke). From March 5: "Swing Kids" (Thomas Carter).
Theatre 3: "Untamed Heart" (†).
Theatre 4: "Damage" (Louis Malle).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Love Field" (†).
Theatre 2: "Groundhog Day" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Temp" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"A Few Good Men" (Rob Reiner).

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: Through March 4: "The Crying Game" (†). From March 5: "Swing Kids" (Thomas Carter).
Theatre 2: "The Crying Game" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Passion Fish" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"A River Runs Through It" (Robert Redford).

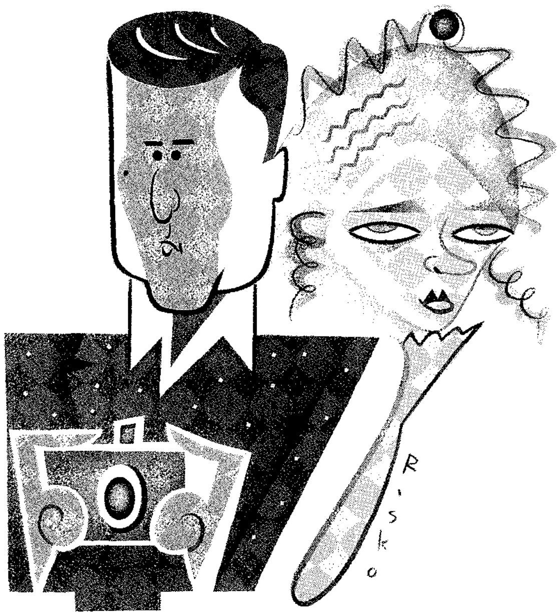
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through March 4: "Army of Darkness" (†). From March 5: "Best of the Best 2" (Robert Radler).
Theatre 2: "Aladdin," an animated film.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Malcolm X" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through March 4: "Used People" (Beeban Kidron). From March 5: "Amos & Andrew" (†).
Theatre 2: Through March 4: "The Vanishing" (†). From March 5: "Mad Dog and Glory" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Howards End" (James Ivory).
Theatre 2: "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey" (Duwayne Dunham).
Theatre 3: "Damage" (Louis Malle).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Scent of a Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Groundhog Day" (†).
Theatre 3: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1" (Gene Quintano).
Theatre 4: "Untamed Heart" (†)
Theatre 5: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 6: Through March 4: "Groundhog Day" (†). From March 5: "Rich in Love".



Robert De Niro and Uma Thurman in "Mad Dog and Glory."

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through March 4: "Sniper" (Luis Llosa). From March 5: "Shadow of the Wolf" (Jacques Dorfmann).
Theatre 2: "Sommersby" (Jon Amiel).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"A Few Good Men" (Rob Reiner).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Falling Down" (†).
Theatre 2: "Falling Down" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"The Last Days of Chez Nous" (†).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Unforgiven" (†).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"The Temp" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: Through March 4: "The Vanishing" (†). From March 5: "Amos & Andrew" (†).
Theatre 2: "Scent of a Woman" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Groundhog Day" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Few Good Men" (Rob Reiner).
Theatre 3: "Falling Down" (†).
Theatre 4: Through March 4: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1" (Gene Quintano). From March 5: "Mad Dog and Glory" (†).
Theatre 5: "Untamed Heart" (†)
Theatre 6: Through March 4: "Falling Down" (†). From March 5: "Swing Kids" (Thomas Carter).
Theatre 7: "Sommersby" (Jon Amiel).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey" (Duwayne Dunham).
Theatre 2: "Aladdin," an animated film.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Taiga" (directed by Ulrike Ottinger, in Mongolian and Tuwinien). This documentary (over eight hours long) is being shown in three parts.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Guncrazy" (Tamra Davis).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: Through March 4: "Army of Darkness" (†). From March 5: "Rich in Love" (Bruce Beresford).
Theatre 2: "Untamed Heart" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Scent of a Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: Through March 4: "The Vanishing" (†). From March 5: "Mad Dog and Glory" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Reservoir Dogs" (Quentin Tarantino), with Harvey Keitel.
Theatre 2: "Indochine" (†).
Theatre 3: "Riff-Raff" (†).
Theatre 4: "Indochine" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "A Few Good Men" (Rob Reiner), with Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson.
Theatre 2: "Scent of a Woman" (†).
Theatre 3: "Passion Fish" (†).
Theatre 4: "Groundhog Day" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 6: "Falling Down" (†).
Theatre 7: Through March 4: "Falling Down" (†). From March 5: "Rich in Love" (Bruce Beresford).
Theatre 8: Through March 4: "Groundhog Day" (†). From March 5: "Mad Dog and Glory" (†).
Theatre 9: "Untamed Heart" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Vanishing" (†).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Aladdin," an animated film; (evenings only) "Lorenzo's Oil" (George Miller).
Theatre 3: Through March 4: "Army of Darkness" (†). From March 5: "Best of the Best 2" (Robert Radler).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Aladdin," an animated film.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Damage" (Louis Malle).
Theatre 2: "Chaplin" (Richard Attenborough).
Theatre 3: "Peter's Friends" (Kenneth Branagh).
Theatre 4: "Enchanted April" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 5: "A Few Good Men" (Rob Reiner).
Theatre 6: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (James Foley).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Groundhog Day" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Riff-Raff" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Cemetery Club" (Bill Duke).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Mac" (†).
Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (†).

Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Lover" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).

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MOVIE HOUSES-Cont'd

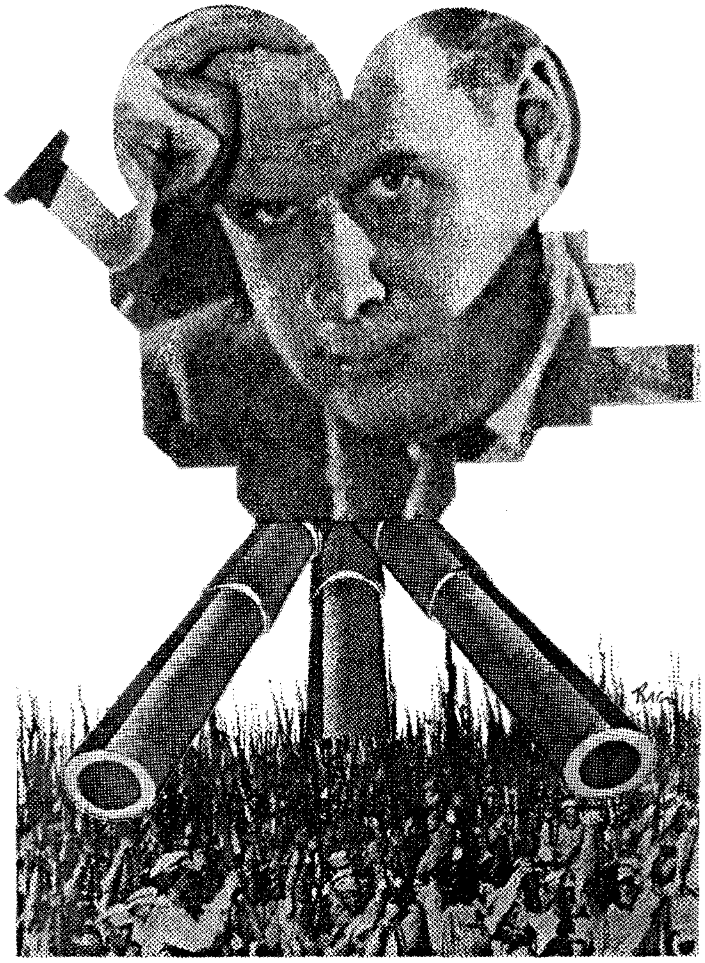
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Howards End" (James Ivory).
Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Sommersby" (Jon Amiel).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
Through March 4: "Untamed Heart" (†).
From March 5: "Amos & Andrew" (†).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 2: "Olivier Olivier" (†).
Theatre 3: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (Alain Corneau).
Theatre 4: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 5: "Indochine" (†).
Theatre 6: "Il Ladro di Bambini" (Gianni Amelio, in Italian).
Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Scent of a Woman" (†).
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Unforgiven" (†).
Theatre 2: "Falling Down" (†).
Theatre 3: "Groundhog Day" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Temp" (†).
Theatre 5: "Aladdin," an animated film.
Theatre 6: "Passion Fish" (†).
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey" (Duwayne Dunham).
Theatre 2: Through March 4: "Army of Darkness" (†). From March 5: "Mad Dog and Glory" (†).
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: Through March 4: "Love Field" (†). From March 5: "Best of the Best 2" (Robert Radler).
Theatre 2: "A Few Good Men" (Rob Reiner).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "The Vanishing" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Bodyguard" (directed by Mick Jackson).
Theatre 3: "Falling Down" (†).
Theatre 4: "Sniper" (Luis Llosa).
Theatre 5: "The Vanishing" (†).Through March 4: "Unforgiven" (†). From March 5: "Best of the Best 2" (Robert Radler).
Theatre 6: Through March 4: "Dead Alive" (Peter Jackson). From March 5: "Love Your Mama" (Ruby Oliver).
Theatre 7: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1" (Gene Quintano).
Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through March 4: "Fifty Fifty" (Charles Martin Smith).
From March 5: "Amos & Andrew" (†).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: Through March 4: "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey" (Duwayne Dunham). From March 5: "Shadow of the Wolf" (Jacques Dorfmann).
Theatre 2: Through March 4: "Untamed Heart" (†). From March 5: "Fifty Fifty" (Charles Martin Smith), with Peter Weller and Robert Hays.
Theatre 3: Through March 4: "Love Field" (†). From March 5: "Swing Kids" (Thomas Carter).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"The Temp" (†).
National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Scent of a Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: Through March 4: "Army of Darkness" (†). From March 5: "Mad Dog and Glory" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through March 4: "Nothing but a Man" (1964, directed by Michael Roemer).
March 5-8: "Potemkin" (see below); and "Que Viva Mexico" (†).
From March 9: "October" (1927, Sergei Eisenstein; a Russian silent film); and "Misery and Fortune of Women" (1929, Eisenstein), a documentary.
Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
March 3: "Breaker Morant" (1980, Bruce Beresford), with Edward Woodward; and "Gallipoli" (1981, Peter Weir), with Mel Gibson.
March 4: "Fanny and Alexander" (1983, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish).
March 5-6: "Taxi Driver" (1976, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro; and "Raging Bull" (1980, Scorsese), with De Niro.
March 7: "Funny Face" (1957, Stanley Donen), and "Sabrina" (1954, Billy Wilder), both with Audrey Hepburn.
March 8: "The Rules of the Game" (1939, Jean Renoir; in French); and "Pépé le Moko" (1937, Julien Duvivier; in French).
March 9: "How to Marry a Millionaire" (†) and "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" (†).



Sergei Eisenstein

MOVIES IN BRIEF

SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

1905 and All That

SERGEI EISENSTEIN'S 1925 masterpiece, "Potemkin" (playing March 5-8, at Film Forum 2), is a great political melodrama and a revolutionary piece of film craft. It's also a thrilling shipboard adventure, and that's not a frivolous compliment. In his version of the 1905 mutiny on the battleship Potemkin, Eisenstein derives concentrated action poetry from seafarers maneuvering in close quarters among ladders, ropes, and hatchways. Of course, he seizes on the naval hierarchy as a microcosm of class warfare—he demonizes the officers, the petty officers, and (worst of all) a priest who tries to purge the men of their rebellious spirit. But the director's single-mindedness heightens the film's elemental power. Eisenstein politicizes *everything,* down to the maggots on a rotten slab of meat: the crew's refusal to drink rancid borscht (and the senior officer's brutal response to it) is what catalyzes the mutiny. By the time the action moves to the town of Odessa, where the populace rises in sympathy with the sailors, the audience craves relief. Eisenstein does provide some lyrical depictions of solidarity. Then he brings the claustrophobia and tyranny of the battleship to dry land in the most excruciatingly tense set piece of all time—the massacre of civilians on the Odessa steps. Its savage potency has survived sixty-eight years of imitation.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Amos & Andrew—With Nicolas Cage and Samuel L. Jackson, directed by E. Max Frye. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Bay Cinema, Baronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Embassy 1; starting March 5.)

Army of Darkness—Sam Raimi's third installment of the "Evil Dead" series is a willfully chaotic comic-book movie—like pages of *Tales from the Crypt* randomly interspersed with pages of *Mad* and *Classics Illustrated.* The hero of all three films, Bruce Campbell, behaves dumber than ever when he's sucked through a time vortex into the Middle Ages; on a quest for the black-magic how-to book known as the Necronomicon, he inadvertently unleashes legions of militant living dead. This time out, Raimi only occasionally shows off his Grand Guignol-slapstick skill at tickling the funny bone while dismantling entire skeletons. Even die-hard fans may long for something to hold the tacky flourishes together—a plot, or maybe even a guide that's more lucid than the Necronomicon. —M.S. (Bay Cinema, Manhattan Twin, Waverly, 23rd Street East Triplex, Metro Cinema, and National Twin; through March 4.)

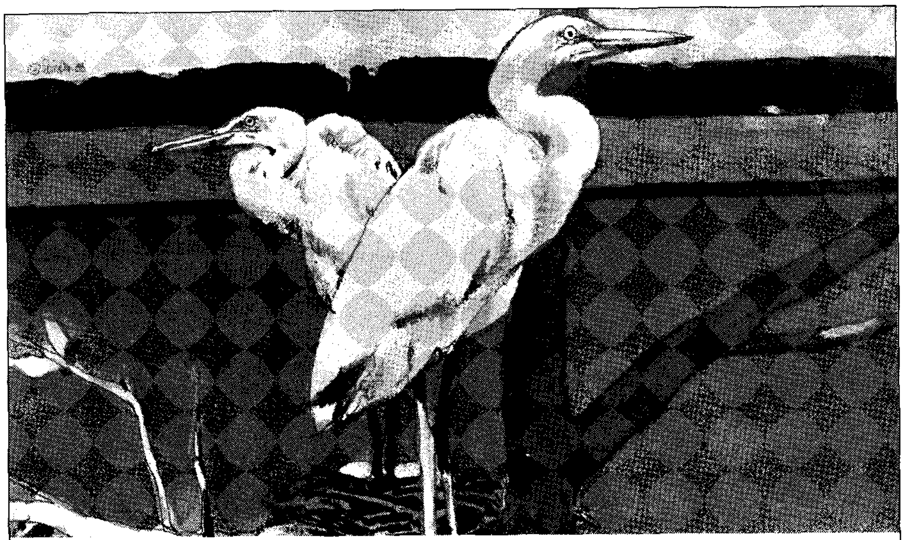
The Crying Game—This amazing new movie by the Irish writer and director Neil Jordan ("Mona Lisa," "The Miracle") has the sure grip and the unstoppable momentum of a dream. Jordan tells the story of Fergus (Stephen Rea), a troubled I.R.A. gunman who undergoes a thorough emotional metamorphosis, and he makes the hero's change of heart moving and persuasive; the film inspires an irrational sort of trust, a willing suspension of something deeper and more fundamental than disbelief. The script is full of reversals and abrupt dislocations and, halfway through, the movie springs a huge, jaw-dropping surprise. Disorienting us isn't the ultimate aim of Jordan's artistic strategy, though; he jars us out of our accustomed responses to prepare us for the purer, more penetrating ones he really wants from us. The picture is a splendid entertainment—an elating, charmed sprint through all sorts of contemporary terrors. Also with a newcomer named Jaye Davidson, who is astonishing.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/16/92.) (Angelika Film Center, Sutton, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Falling Down—With Michael Douglas and Robert Duvall, directed by Joel Schumacher. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village Theatre VII, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953)—Howard Hawks directed this clunky, tired musical farce about gold-digger Lorelei Lee (Marilyn Monroe) and her best friend and fellow-showgirl, Dorothy (Jane Russell). It could be called "Vice Unrewarded." The lead gentlemen (played by Elliott Reid and Tommy Noonan) are losers; the audience gets no satisfaction when the stars' pheromones hit their targets. But Monroe is a doozy: her uncanny combination of voluptuousness and innocence refreshes the "dumb blonde" stereotype. Her trademark mannerisms are here in full force—the mouth that seems to open halfway involuntarily, the eyelids that flatten and then pop wide apart. And she forms them into a quizzical comic style. Her hand gestures while singing "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend"—especially on the line "These rocks don't lose their shape"—are unforgettably insouciant. Charles Lederer wrote the script, from the Broadway hit by Anita Loos and Joseph Fields (based on Loos' novel); the songs are by Jule Styne, Leo Robin, Hoagy Carmichael, and Harold Adamson. —M.S. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; March 9.)

Groundhog Day—An above-average Bill Murray vehicle, directed by Harold Ramis from a script by Ramis and Danny Rubin. The star plays Phil Connors, a burned-out TV weatherman who wakes up one morning to discover that he's stuck in time—condemned to relive, endlessly, Groundhog Day in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. The picture goes on a little too long, but Murray's inventiveness keeps it lively even during its less inspired stretches. The fundamental, deliberate monotony of the conception actually serves to highlight his skill at comic riffing. The movie feels like a spontaneous one-man jam session, and you sense that Murray can play all night, just for the fun of finding out what else he might come up with. He fools around as if there were no tomorrow.—T.R. (2/22/93) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

How to Marry a Millionaire (1953)—Co-starring Lauren Bacall as a hardhead and Betty Grable as a ditz, this creaking Marilyn Monroe vehicle about three models hunting for men in Manhattan replays "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" —but without the songs. It's fortunate that Monroe is at her peak of confidence. A simple shtick defines her character: she's convinced that men don't make passes at girls who wear glasses, yet she's "blind as a bat" without them. Monroe skillfully stumbles into every available laugh; this movie is a case of the blind leading the



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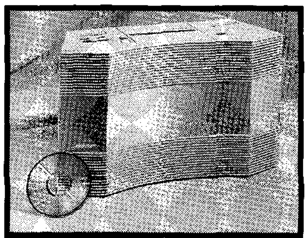

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IN BRIEF-Cont'd

bland. Jean Negulesco directed, from a script by the producer, Nunnally Johnson; with William Powell, Rory Calhoun, David Wayne, and Cameron Mitchell.—M.S. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; March 9.)

Indochine—The director, Régis Wargnier, uses his star, Catherine Deneuve, largely for her classical, indomitable profile—the same attribute that made her the 1985 model for the French national symbol, "Marianne." Indeed, in this wannabe epic about the waning of French Indochina, Wargnier reduces all his actors and characters to symbols: Deneuve, as a French plantation owner who's lived in Indochina all her life and carries on the spirit of pioneer colonialism; lovely Linh Dan Pham, as Deneuve's adopted daughter, an Annamese princess who becomes a revolutionary leader; and blank Vincent Perez, as a confused French naval officer who wows both mother and child, sparking romance and rebellion. This monument-like picture lacks urgency and staying power—the material oxidizes onscreen. The scenes of passion, atrocity, and revolution merely embroider movie-derived ideas of passion, et cetera. With vistas by cinematographer François Catonné that should increase the tourist traffic in Vietnam and Malaysia. In French.—M.S. (Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

At MOMA, Shashi Kapoor and Felicity Kendal in James Ivory's "Shakespeare Wallah."

The Last Days of Chez Nous—In a ramshackle Sydney household, an Australian family gets on with its life, but only just. Beth (Lisa Harrow) starts to lose her French husband, J.P. (Bruno Ganz), to the attentions of her sister Vicki (Kerry Fox); meanwhile, her daughter Annie (Miranda Otto) is falling quietly for Tim (Kiri Paramore), their lodger with the crewcut and the sense of humor. Gillian Armstrong's new movie is a worthy successor to "My Brilliant Career" and "High Tide"; if anything, it feels even more mobile, charting every shift in the emotional climate. It's hard to pin down just what kind of work it is: jokes at the dinner table can turn nasty and upsetting, but people also recover quickly, and sometimes dance without warning. It's a true ensemble movie: none of the performances are vain or showy—Harrow in particular braves all manner of self-exposure, so we can see the fear beneath her strength. She longs to keep the house in order, while everyone else is itching to relax or break free—you can see it in the look of the film, the way that figures mess around within careful compositions. This fluent, hopeful comedy (and it is a comedy, for all the encroachments of sadness) is Armstrong's best movie to date.—A.L. (3/1/93) (Village East Cinemas, and 68th St. Playhouse.)

Like Water for Chocolate—Alfonso Arau's sticky, lusty, and rather ludicrous movie is set on a Mexican ranch in 1910. The head of the family is the the unyielding Mama Elena (Regina Torne), who determines the destinies of her three daughters. The youngest, Tita (Lumi Cavazos), must stay at home and never marry. Needless to say, she promptly falls in love. It's the old story, passions trying to burst through the shell of repression, and it infects the rest of the film: well-behaved wedding guests suddenly grow weepy or horny, and the old social order is menaced by bands of roaming revolutionaries. But what should be a struggle turns into a giggle; Arau's style loses its balance, swooning into endless closeups of damp brows and heaving bosoms. Just in case we miss the point, there's also a persistent voice-over designed to boil our blood ("voluptuously, ardently fragrant and utterly sensual"). The plot is full of cookery, but it's an overloaded metaphor; the kitchen stands for the bedroom, and that's that. There's none of the patient, civilizing artistry that we saw in the cooking scenes of "Babette's Feast." Scripted by Laura Esquivel from her own novel, the movie feels like second-hand Magic Realism: it takes a shortcut to weirdness without hooking into anything substantial. This peaks at the end, when a couple makes love inside what appears to be a giant barbecue. Some like it hot, sure, but this hot? In Spanish.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Love Field—Jonathan Kaplan's movie begins in Dallas on the day of John Kennedy's assassination and follows its heroine, a Kennedy-worshipping married woman named Lurene (Michelle Pfeiffer), as she embarks on a journey from Dallas to Washington, where she hopes to attend the President's funeral. Along the way, she gets herself tangled up in the lives of a quiet young black man, Paul (Dennis Haysbert), and his eight-year-old daughter, Jonell (Stephanie McFadden), whom she has met on a bus; before long, the script (by Don Roos) contrives to set them all on the run, outlaw-style, in a stolen car. Lurene and Paul become lovers. The rhythm is odd: this is a chase picture that moves at the Sunday-drive pace of the stately sedan in "Driving Miss Daisy." The movie is full of subtle, sharply observed, and emotionally convincing scenes, and its attitude toward the main characters is sensibly free of historical hindsight. The filmmakers err in the direction of modesty and tact; they stick to a flat, lulling TV-movie tone. But Pfeiffer's performance—energetic, funny, and lucid—keeps lifting the picture above its limitations.—T.R. (12/14/92) (34th Street Showplace. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas, Olympia, and Embassy; through March 4.)

Mac—The actor John Turturro makes his début as a director with "Mac." The first inkling that this might not be a carnival of laughs comes in the opening credits, when somebody scrapes the title into the ground with a stick. Set in Queens in the fifties, this is solemn, impassioned, brow-furrowing stuff, the kind of movie that makes you put aside your popcorn in shame. The story is set in the construction industry, and set pretty firmly; no audience is going to feel too frisky with this much concrete around. Turturro stars as Mac, one of three brothers (the others are played by Michael Badalucco and Carl Capotorto) who inherit their father's business and fall out just as they begin to flourish. The film is a hymn to hard work and workmanship, which is fine, except that it whacks you over the head with its elegy for better times. "Today, it's the man who can talk," Mac moans. "Then, it was the man who could do." In pushing himself to the forefront of a movie, Turturro seems to have left something behind—the vulnerable good temper that bore him through "Barton Fink" and "Do the Right Thing." His sweetness has turned sour, and the movie follows suit; it feels grouchy and joyless. Things improve briefly when Ellen Barkin shows up as a kooky artist's model, and writhes naked in a pile of sliced bread; but Turturro soon leaves her stranded. He thinks he has better, more worthy things to do with his film. It's hard to agree.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Mad Dog and Glory—With Robert De Niro, Uma Thurman, and Bill Murray; directed by John McNaughton. (See illustration.) (Coronet, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin; starting March 5.)

Malcolm X—There's a great deal of passion in Spike Lee's three-hour-and-twenty-minute adaptation of "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," but it's not an artist's passion. Malcolm, who achieved fame in the early sixties as a compelling spokesman for the black-pride philosophy of the Nation of Islam, is an unlikely hero for a big-studio prestige picture: he begins as a predatory street criminal, becomes a studious Muslim ascetic, and fulfills himself as a scourge. The ponderous rhythms of the great-man bio-pic only emphasize the impossibility of rendering this story with conventional movie-narrative means. Denzel Washington's performance as Malcolm gets off to a rocky start—for the first hour, he's required to play the hero as a teen-ager—but it gains authority as the movie goes along. This film's Malcolm isn't so much a character as an image: a statue for us to look up at in wonder.—T.R. (11/30/92) (59th Street East Cinema.)

El Mariachi—This first film by twenty-four-year-old Robert Rodriguez was made for seven thousand dollars, and part of its enormous charm is that it really looks like a seven-thousand-dollar movie. It's a grubby little thriller, set in a Mexican border town, about a wandering mariachi musician (Carlos Gallardo) who is mistaken for a killer. The picture is a virtually unbroken series of chases and shoot-outs, and the non-stop action should be tiresome, but it isn't. Rodriguez establishes a delirious pace, and keeps the bullets flying and the corpses crumpling for a brisk, and appropriately terse, eighty-two minutes. The movie has the sort of dry, bracingly unwholesome humor that relentless mayhem can produce if the characters are mean and abject enough and the storytelling is speedy and laconic. This young filmmaker is no visual wizard; he's just an energetic and imaginative manipulator of tried-and-true genre conventions. But if you enter his seedy world with expectations as low as the picture's aspirations, you'll probably have a very good time. Also with Reinol Martinez, Consuelo Gómez, and Peter Marquardt. In Spanish.—T.R. (2/22/93) (Village Theatre VII.)

Olivier Olivier—In the heart of the French countryside, a young boy disappears without a trace. Six years later, he—or someone claiming to be him—reappears in a Paris police station, and is reunited with his family. Agnieszka Holland's film is, we are told, "inspired by true events," but "inspired" is pitching it a little strong. As with her last work, "Europa Europa," Holland has cooked up a great plot, then thrown it away. After a taut half hour, the suspense slackens off; Holland loses her sense of timing, veering between the hasty and the sluggish. Whenever a good idea comes up, it gets overplayed: a startling flashback of the young Olivier on a garden swing, say, goes on twice too long. (Zbigniew Preisner's score is similarly puffed up, out of all proportion to the scale of events.) The movie flickers with creepy suggestions—a dash of incest, a smattering of occult powers—but they never cohere. It's up to Brigitte Roüan, playing the boy's mother, to hold it all together as best she can. It's an angry, immoderate performance—there's an echo of Susan Sarandon in both her looks and her manner—and one that lends drive to a carelessly told tale. The ending is plain silly; Roüan, for one, deserves better. With Grégoire Colin as the older Olivier. In French—A.L. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Passion Fish—Eighteen years ago, John Sayles might have boiled down this back-to-basics portrait of a paralyzed, bitter white soap star (Mary McDonnell) and her strong-willed black caretaker (Alfre Woodard) into a twenty-page short story. But as a movie writer-director-editor, he lets himself gas on about it for two and a quarter hours. Sayles has an ear for regional accents and colloquial dialogue, and an eye for quotidian details. But he's better on nuts and bolts than he is on heart and soul. The characters have consistency but no spontaneity or depth: their "surprises" are programmed. Sayles predictably intersperses scenes of rehab drama and female friendship with comic relief and local (Louisiana) color. Only David Strathairn and Vondie Curtis-Hall cut through the monotony as the heroines' earthy admirers. Those who've seen Sayles' bit in "Matinee" promoting the ant-man horror movie "Mant" might hope that the title creatures in this film will turn out to be imaginative hybrids, too. No such luck—they're simply little fishies attached to big metaphors.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Que Viva Mexico ("Time in the Sun"; 1940)—The only film that Eisenstein directed outside the Soviet Union was never completed. But out of the fabulous footage that he and his cinematographer, Edouard Tissé, shot in Mexico in 1930 and 1931 the film "Que Viva Mexico" was edited by his disciples, who attempted to approximate his original play—from Aztec cults through Conquistadores and peonage to Christian feasts. The footage imposes its vision of the Indian faces and the Mexican landscape; these faces are perhaps too noble and eternal, but they are marvellous to look at.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; March 5-8.)

Riff-Raff—The ads proclaim, "A new comedy by Ken Loach . . . . Really!" Really? Well, sort of. In this extended sketch of contemporary working-class life, poorly compensated laborers from all over Great Britain create luxury quarters in London. The best parts *are* funny. The characters' byplay has a lived-in, badgering humor that gives the audience a rough tickle. Everything concerning a seasoned, chubby left-winger (Ricky Tomlinson) who uses the model bathroom and challenges the bosses is prime workplace comedy—pithy and sardonic. But Loach reverts to form when he depicts the romance between a young worker (Robert Carlyle) and a would-be singer (Emer McCourt). It's a failure both as a relationship and as a mini-dramedy. And Loach can't resist an editorial framing image (rats in debris) and a messagey finale. The movie would benefit from a few unexpected riffs; it needs to be more raffish. Script by Bill Jesse. In English, with American subtitles.—M.S. (Quad Cinema, and Festival.)

Scent of a Woman—Director Martin Brest and screenwriter Bo Goldman labor mightily to design a holiday-season heart-warmer about a middle-aged blind man and a troubled teen-ager (Chris O'Donnell), but fortunately their low intentions are undone by the star, Al Pacino, whose performance taps emotions too complex and too frightening to be resolved by the simple moral victory that ends the picture. His Frank Slade, a retired Army officer and former aide to L.B.J., is a bitter, misanthropic, profoundly depressed man, and the actor makes us feel the full weight of the character's hopelessness. This is acting that chills the heart beyond any possibility of warming. The filmmakers may dismiss the audience with a banal lesson written on the blackboard—"Smell the roses" is the gist—but by the end we're not paying much attention. We're still sorting out the ambiguities and uncomfortable truths that Pacino's great performance has let us in on.—T.R. (12/28/92-1/4/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

Strictly Ballroom—Baz Luhrmann's first film brings good news: Australian cinema is on the move again, with a vigor not seen since the days of "Mad Max." There's no violence in "Strictly Ballroom"—the general lack of unpleasantness, in fact, is quite unnerving—but the speed of it still leaves you reeling. A young dancer, played by Paul Mercurio, acquires a new partner (Tara Morice), dreams up a flash routine, and sets out to break the Old Guard. The plot is cut-rate melodrama, and Luhrmann knows it; but he never sneers at his hero's ambitions. Besides, there are so many other things to laugh at—the costumes, the minor characters with their major obsessions, the psychedelic makeup, the trashy music. The movie is over before you know it, and is not one to linger in the mind, or indeed pass through the mind at all; but it's a good-humored ride for the senses, never too sickly, and who can say no to that?—A.L. (2/15/93) (Angelika Film Center, and First & 62nd Cinemas.)

The Temp—People are stabbed in the back, replaced without warning, reduced to hysteria. And that's just the corporate takeover part! Before this cheap thriller goes the way of all "fill-in-the-blank from Hell" movies, the director, Tom Holland, and the screenwriter, Kevin Falls, wring sour laughs of recognition at the nineties version of the rat race. Glittery-eyed Lara Flynn Boyle plays the blatant villainess: an ambitious temp assistant to executive Timothy Hutton (a paranoid nice guy). At first, the filmmakers put an ironic spin on the obvious plot turns. But halfway through they seem to give up—they let the action degenerate to the level of a USA-channel TV movie. Although Hutton is adept at tortured blandness, and Faye Dunaway looks and acts smart as his boss, the improbabilities swamp them. During the desperation ending, you can almost smell the producers' flop sweat.—M.S. (34th Street Showplace, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza. . . . ¶ 19th Street East 6; through March 4.)

Unforgiven—Set in eighteen-eighties Kansas and Wyoming, this engrossing, moody Western is the sixteenth film Clint Eastwood has directed, and by far the best. The canny script, by David Webb Peoples, revives the old story about the retired gunfighter (Eastwood) who picks up his firearms again for one last score. But there's no easy resolution, and the movie is stronger because of its loose ends: the filmmakers acknowledge that the bloody chaos of an outlaw's life can't be settled in two hours and eleven minutes. The action begins when a cowboy slashes the face of a prostitute, and her co-workers pool their money to offer a reward for the murder of him and his partner. Jaimz Woolvett is the upstart who enlists Eastwood in the bounty hunt. Morgan Freeman plays Eastwood's longtime partner, Gene Hackman a megalomaniac sheriff, Richard Harris a flamboyant English gunslinger, and Saul Rubinek a dime novelist. This is the finest set of performances ever to grace a Clint Eastwood movie, and this time Eastwood even does a good job directing Eastwood.—M.S. (8/10/92) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Tower East, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; through March 4.)

Untamed Heart—A young man with a weak heart (Christian Slater), who works in a crummy diner, gets noticed by a lonely waitress (Marisa Tomei). You can guess the rest, but that doesn't detract from the mild, inoffensive pleasure of Tony Bill's film. The love story takes second place to the casual comedy that surrounds it—bored girls sitting around talking about boys. One of them is played by Rosie Perez, who's a natural at this kind of thing; but even her perkiness is put in the shade by Tomei, who brings startling high spirits to a dullish role. She snatches moments of happiness out of the air and shares them out to anyone who's around. The title, by the way, refers to some weird story about the hero's past—he thinks his heart came from a monkey—but the film skids around this in confusion. On the other hand, he does look a bit of an ape; O.K., love is love, but you still wonder what Tomei is doing with him.—A.L. (2/15/93) (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ 62nd & Broadway, and Embassy; through March 4.)

The Vanishing—Or, "The Vulgarization." The director, George Sluizer, trashes his own ingenious 1988 Dutch thriller in this wretchedly acted Hollywood remake. It has an identical plot: a young man (Kiefer Sutherland), possessed by the need to know what happened to his kidnapped lover, makes himself vulnerable to her abductor (Jeff Bridges). But this time the story lacks fibre, verve, distinction. The problem isn't just that Sandra Bullock, as the missing woman, fails to stick in your mind the way Johanna Ter Steege did. It's that Todd Graff's script gives too much weight to Bridges' hyperrational yet gaudy villain, while turning the hero's current girlfriend (Nancy Travis) into a life force, and building to a climactic, stop-and-go battle with a plank, a knife, and a spade. When it comes to clichés, Graff just shovels them on.—M.S. (23rd St. West Triplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Coronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Art Greenwich Twin; through March 4.)

Grégoire Colin in "Olivier Olivier."

BANANA REPUBLIC

THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

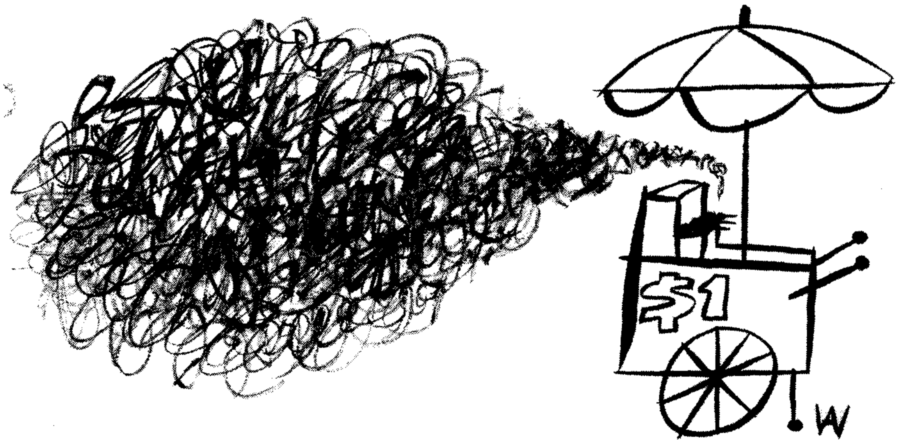
RELUCTANT DÉBUTANTE

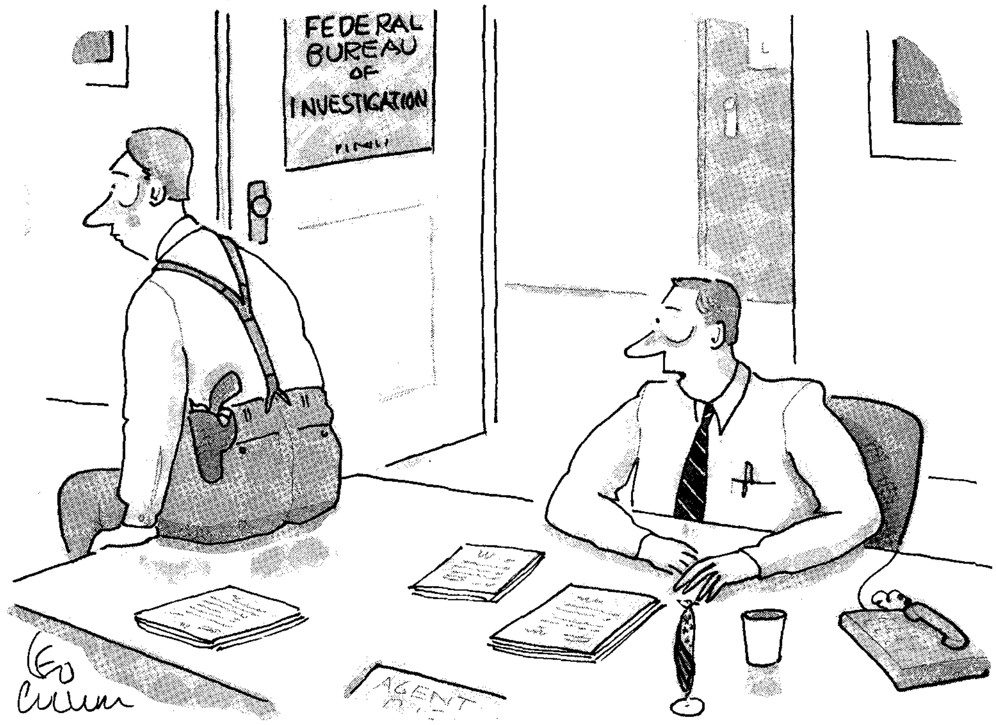
THERE has been little in Russell Baker's writing to indicate an interest in television, let alone any sort of affection for it, but last week he said, "In America, if you're not on television, somehow you're not an American. And, like all Americans, I want to be on television." It was "to satisfy this lust" that, at the age of sixty-seven, and after forty-five years of confinement to the printed page, he had agreed to replace Alistair Cooke as the permanent host of "Masterpiece Theatre." The job is not, on the face of it, an important or demanding one. The host is required to do little more than adopt a cultivated air and dignify each new British miniseries on PBS with a graceful explanatory introduction, but Mr. Cooke's triumphant twenty-two-year incumbency made the job one of the most respected in the medium. In January, Rebecca Eaton, the executive producer of the series, described the position as "a burnished golden job," and said that since last July, when Mr. Cooke decided to retire, as many as six hundred people had applied to succeed him. It took WGBH, the Boston station that puts together "Masterpiece Theatre" for PBS, several months to arrive at the conclusion that Mr. Baker was its man. He will begin his new job in October.

The announcement was made at a news conference last Tuesday at the Helmsley Palace Hotel. Mr. Baker, paying in advance the price of television fame, came up to New York from Florida, where he was on vacation, to answer journalists' questions. This he did with charming self-deprecation. He had not wanted to be Alistair Cooke's successor, he said, but, rather, "to be the man who succeeded the man who succeeded Alistair Cooke." However, on the insistence of his daughter Kasia ("She said I needed to do something to refresh my spirit"), he had agreed to accept the job without an interregnum. But he was still worried. He was worried about writing introductions of only four hundred words ("I can barely clear my throat in four hundred words"); he was worried about his lack of television experience ("I have only made three-minute belch-and-burp appearances on morning television, to sell my books"); he was worried above all about what would happen to his hair ("I've always cut my own hair. My greatest fear is that I will be sent to a hair stylist").

Mr. Baker's hair is not smooth and silky, like Mr. Cooke's, but it is almost as silvery and, in its unruliness, certainly more British-looking. As an interpreter of British culture to an American audience, Mr. Baker can also claim the qualification of having lived in Britain more recently than his predecessor, for Mr. Cooke, although he is of British birth, has lived in the United States since the thirties, whereas Mr. Baker was the London correspondent of the Baltimore *Sun* in the early fifties, when he covered the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and wrote a weekly feature for his American readers called "Window on Fleet Street." When a reporter suggested that his *Times* column revealed him as quintessentially American, and therefore perhaps ill-suited to step into Mr. Cooke's shoes, he replied, "I demur from the suggestion that I'm a quintessential American—a quintessential Wasp, perhaps." In a *Times* column in January, mocking the jargon of the age, Mr. Baker defined himself in greater detail as "a genderly enlightened, Celt-sensitive, politically unpredictable, comparatively financially disadvantaged, square, married, heterosexual, comb-carrying, college-educated, hearing-impaired, Depression-generation, male European-American."

While discretion about the hundreds of other candidates for the job has been





"Has anyone considered that maybe his dress was a disguise?"

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scrupulously observed, Ms. Eaton disclosed last week that they had included not only journalists and actors from both sides of the Atlantic but also a few "aristocrats." Mr. Baker had emerged in the end as the "perfect" choice, she said. But does "Masterpiece Theatre" really need a host at all? When that question was put to Mr. Baker, he replied, "American television likes hosts. Don't ask me why."

AFTERMATH

In the early-morning hours of August 24, 1970, what was then the largest improvised bomb in world history exploded in a Ford van outside Sterling Hall, on the campus of the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Then, as now, Sterling Hall was home to the university's Physics Department, but in 1970 the building also housed the Army Mathematics Research Center, which was the target of the attack—a protest against the Vietnam War.

One person was killed in the explosion: Robert Fassnacht, a thirty-three-year-old physicist, unaffiliated with Army Math, who was working late in the Physics Department. The bombing was the work of the New Year's Gang, a fringe anti-war group headed by Karl Armstrong, who was a native of Madison and had been a student at the university. Karl carried out the attack with three accomplices: his younger brother Dwight, David Fine, and Leo Burt. All but Leo Burt, who is still on the lam, were eventually arrested and sentenced to prison terms.

After serving eight years of a twenty-three-year sentence, Karl Armstrong came home to Madison, and today he is a familiar figure on the campus. Forty-six years old and bald on top, with long sideburns, he sells fruit smoothies and other fresh-squeezed juices from a multicolored wagon called Loose Juice, which he parks on a small plaza in front of Memorial Library. About a quarter of his customers, he says, know who he is, yet no one has objected to his presence there. The Loose Juice wagon is about a five-minute walk from the Social Science Building, which is, in turn, only a few steps from Sterling Hall. Inside Social Science, Robert Fassnacht's widow, Stephanie, works as a computer consultant for the university's Institute for Research on Poverty. She, too, was drawn back to Madison.

When Fassnacht died, he left a three-year-old son and twin daughters, aged one. Shortly after the bombing, Stephanie and the three children moved to Copenhagen. Stephanie, who grew up in San Diego, says, "For some reason I always wanted to go to Denmark, and it was an opportune time." She was unable to find a permanent job there, however, and brought her family back to Madison in 1974. "Most of my close friends were here," she says. "It was where our children were born, and I felt comfortable here."

She lived in graduate-student housing, and in 1985 she received a doctorate in Third World development. She is aware of Karl Armstrong's juice stand but has never set eyes on it or on him. "My kids have seen him, though," she says. In some respects, Armstrong has benefitted from the sympathy of a well-organized, long-lived, and somewhat extreme segment of the anti-war movement based in Madison. Back in 1973, according to "Rads," a book, by Tom Bates, about the bombing, a large and supportive crowd attended his sentencing hearing, which featured testimony on his behalf from former Senator Ernest Gruening and from three professors—Richard Falk, Gabriel Kolko, and Howard Zinn. After Armstrong's release from prison, his defense committee provided him with a small nest egg. Although the bombing had the force of thirty-four hundred sticks of dynamite and damaged twenty-six buildings, today's students appear to know almost nothing about the event. In a recent informal survey of a dozen undergraduates in Sterling Hall, all born after 1970, not one knew who Robert Fassnacht was, and ten did not know that the building had been bombed. There is no plaque or any other kind of memorial to Fassnacht on campus.

Stephanie Fassnacht displays no ill will toward the town, or even toward Karl Armstrong. "He was making a statement in a rather desperate way," she says. "As far as the anti-war movement goes, I was sympathetic. Nobody's bitter, nobody bears a grudge." Stephanie has not remarried. Her two daughters recently graduated from the university.

Their older brother, Chris, graduated from Harvard and served in the Peace Corps. His mother says that Chris is about to apply, as his father once did, to graduate school in physics.

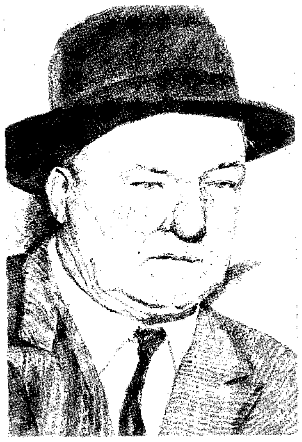
THE WAITING GAME

PEOPLE with illegal babysitters, drivers, and so forth might find an answer to their problem in the State Department's annual lottery. This year, over forty-one thousand green cards will be handed out to a random selection of aliens. A sudden announcement at the end of January that the deadline to enter the lottery would be March 31st, five months earlier than last year, has greatly reduced the time available for aliens to put their applications in. As a result, the general expectation is that the number of applicants will be significantly lower than it was last year, when eight hundred thousand applied. Philip Kleiner, of the local immigration-law firm Barst & Mukamal, predicts that the figure will be around six hundred thousand. That means that chances of winning a green card have never been better.

When the lottery was first held, it was tailored primarily for Irish immigrants. Now a bizarre selection of some thirty nationalities is eligible to apply: France is on the list, but not Spain; Italy, but not Greece; Argentina, but no other Latin-American country; Indonesia and Japan, but no other Asian countries. The chief beneficiaries remain the Irish, who are guaranteed a minimum of sixteen thousand green cards. But the Irish, who, as citizens of the European Community, are automatically entitled to take jobs in any of the twelve E.C. countries, seem to be increasingly uninterested in applying for work permits in the United States, and last year they fell short of their quota by seventeen hundred.

From the beginning, the lottery has generated confusion. At first, applicants were allowed to increase their chances of winning by filing multiple entries. But in 1991 the State Department received nineteen million envelopes. People were sending in hundreds of applications each, and one Englishman reportedly sent ten thousand. As a result, a limit of one per person was imposed the following year. Entering the lottery is, in fact,

ON THE WHOLE



SEVERAL times a year, in the middle of the night, I fall out of bed. I have been dreaming of W. C. Fields. Some miraculous, maniacal, funny-beyond-funny routine has swept across my unconscious, and, laughing like the proverbial hyena, I fall out of bed. I fell out of bed the other night, and instantly traced the nocturnal plunge to the reports that CBS, in a desperate move to keep the gab artiste David Letterman in the Big Apple, had bought the Ed Sullivan Theatre, an elaborate, Gothic-cathedral-like showplace on Broadway between Fifty-third and Fifty-fourth Streets. But Letterman, who gets something like $296,173.47 for every laugh he manages to extract from his insomniac audiences, had nothing to do with the bed episode. Deep down inside, I remembered the Ed Sullivan Theatre when it was called the Hammerstein; late in 1930 (I was still in high school), I played hooky one matinée day and went there to see W. C. Fields in an ill-fated fantasy called "Ballyhoo."

Fields entered atop a calliope, with all stops out. He played a shady character named Q. Q. Quayle, who was the proprietor of a Bunion Derby. Forget the book: it didn't matter. What mattered was Fields, juggling huge stacks of cigar boxes, making them fly through the air with magical ease. Then there he was with an outsized bass fiddle, stroking it, kissing it, whispering small, affectionate nothings to it, hugging it—for all I know, marrying it. Quayle ran out of the green and was about to stick up a passing stranger when he realized that the stranger carried no weapon. "I just can't do it," he said, with an evil smirk. "A thing like that wouldn't be honest."

I had a talk with a cherished friend, the playwright Ruth Goetz. Ruth is a beautiful woman, born before the First World War. Her father, Philip Goodman, produced Fields' first great hit, "Poppy." Fields would often spend a free evening with the Goodmans, dining sumptuously at the Colony restaurant and afterward going to their apartment to play small-stakes poker. Ruth, then in her teens, was allowed to participate. "His humor came out of his desperate, poverty-stricken youth in South Philadelphia, and was his response to his life," she told me. Fields usually brought a lady friend with him—first one, then another. He was punctilious about his poker, shuffling with glorious skill—cards high in the air, cards falling in a perfect cascade into a neat deck. "He had pudgy and dexterous fingers," she said. "He was marvellously funny, but there was never a dirty story—no smut. The humor was tender and humane. He was tremendously well read, loved to talk about Ibsen, a favorite. He *knew* his Ibsen." Ruth once piped up that she didn't quite understand Ibsen, and Fields laid down his cards and said, with great solemnity, "You must never say a thing like that about Ibsen." The games were often joined by H. L. Mencken, a close friend of Philip Goodman's. Mencken and Fields had taken to each other instantly, and talked about plays, books, and Ibsen.

Ruth once asked Fields how he had got into the theatre. "I was fifteen, and hungry," he said.

And now it's Letterman at the Gothic-domed theatre.

On the whole, I'd rather be in Philadelphia.

—PHILIP HAMBURGER

absurdly easy. There is no official form. All you have to do is to write your name, a mailing address, and your date and place of birth on a piece of paper, together with the address of the United States consular office from which you want to receive your visa, and send it to the designated lottery address, in Dulles, Virginia. Applications don't even have to be signed.

Lottery winners are not, of course, guaranteed a green card. They are subjected to the same background checks as standard applicants. Still, the lottery offers the mass of unemployed immigrants their best hope of eventual legality.

SO FAR AWAY

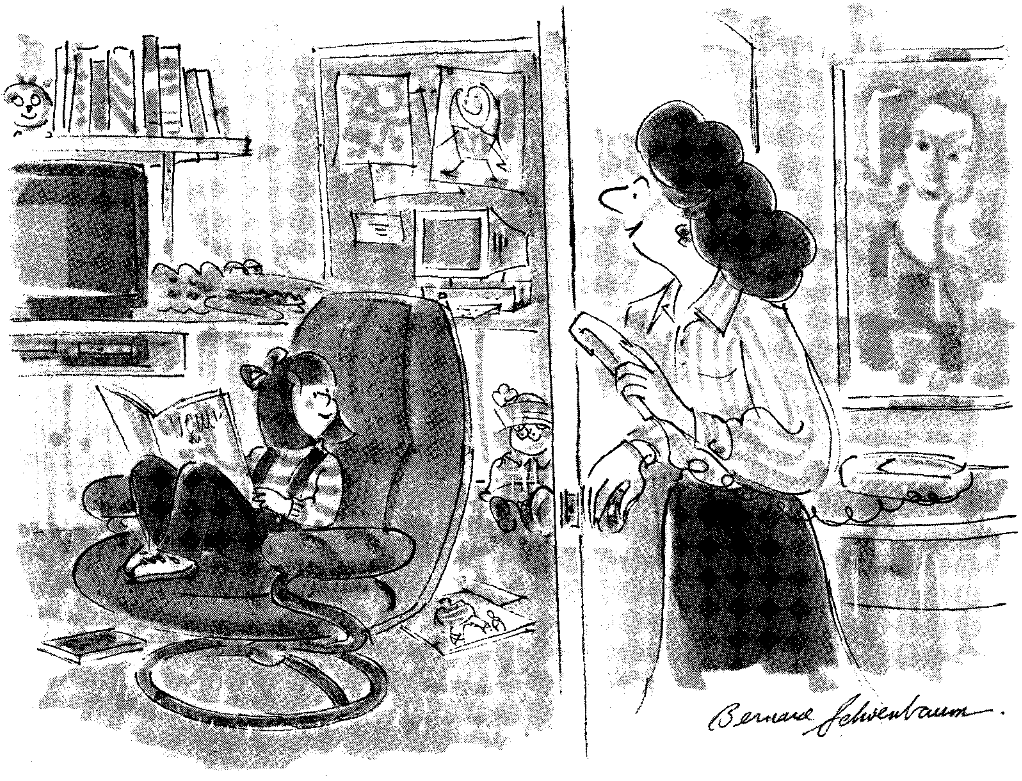
SOME people who are otherwise regular rocks of Gibraltar actually break down and cry when Carole King's "It's Too Late" unexpectedly comes over the radio. ("Baby, now it's too late, though we really did try to make it," the song goes on.) Melancholia like this is the norm, in fact, when it comes to memories of Carole King's music of the seventies. "It reminds me of divorce, things slipping away, " Elisabeth Kovacs, the daughter of Ernie Kovacs, says. "That music reminds me of tie-dye, dyeing undershirts in the sink: wrinkling them up, boiling a big pot of water, putting in the Rit, stirring it around."

"Tapestry: The Music of Carole King," which is a medley of Ms. King's finest hits and is based on her album "Tapestry," which sold at least fifteen million copies, opened at the Union Square Theatre last month. The show is performed on a bare stage by six singers accompanied by six musicians, lasts an hour and a half, and is so far removed in spirit from the muse herself that the experience resembles being forced to listen to a radio stuck on the wrong station.

On opening night, the members of the audience all looked sad, as if they wished they'd brought along Walkmans and their Carole King tapes. And Carole King, so famous for her long, frizzy hair and her reclusiveness, did not appear, and could not be reached to explain why. Nor was she at the party after the show, which was held at the Villa Lulu, on Park Avenue South. Don Kirshner, the music publisher and impresario who originally promoted the career not only of Carole King but also of Neil Diamond, Bobby Darin, Tony Orlando, and Neil Sedaka, and who is the creative consultant to "Tapestry," said he'd heard she was with Al Gore discussing the environment and hadn't been able to make it. Mr. Kirshner has a squarish face, a tan, and a seventies haircut (sort of helmet style), and he looks like a bouncer. "I couldn't believe she wouldn't take an interest," he said. "She's one of my little writers. I signed her in 1959."

When he was asked what it was like to be a kind of godfather of rock and roll, he replied, "You gotta understand—you're working, and you don't realize how the years go by. You know, my idols were people like Walt Disney, and I feel that what he did with Pinocchio and Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse I had the ability to do in my own right—build the stars as a star maker. And maybe it's because, you know, I don't read or write music—and I guess maybe I live vicariously through these people, 'cause I don't have the talent myself—but, you know, I'm the man with the golden ear. And then you gotta work hard to make it happen. When I had 'Will You Love Me Tomorrow,' if I told you how many people turned it down you wouldn't believe it. Mitch Miller turned it down. Carole played it for the Shirelles, and the rest is history."

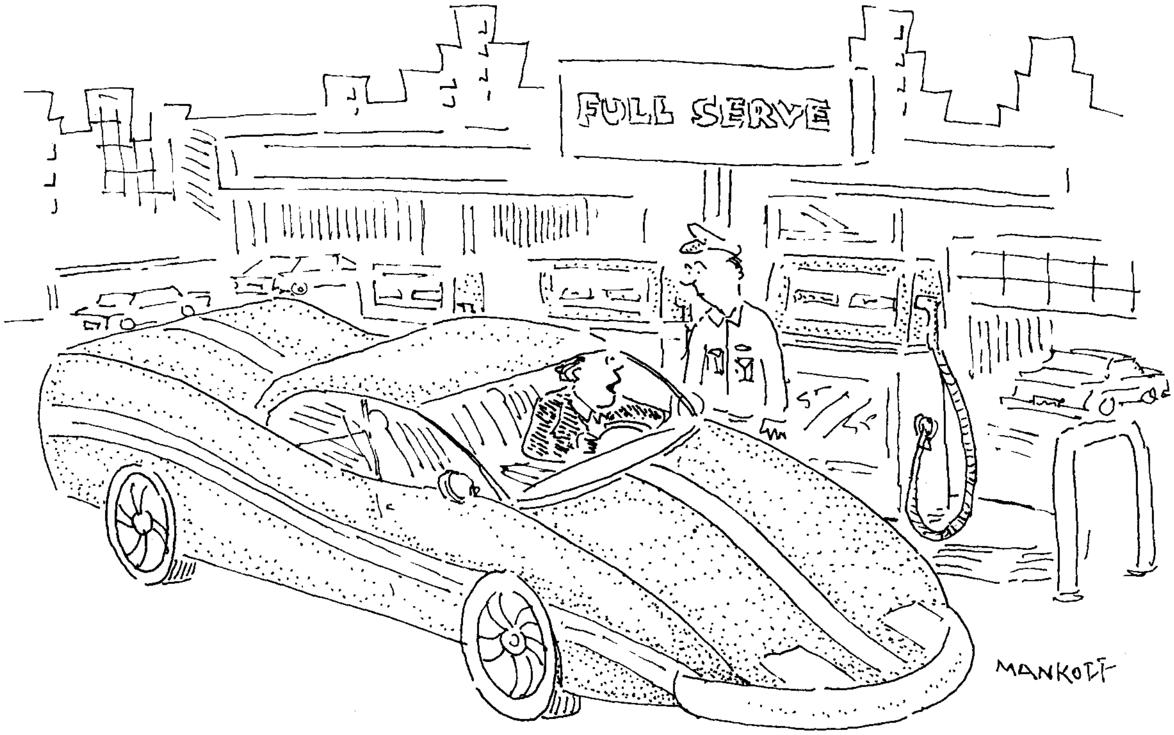
Mr. Kirshner admitted that it had been years since he had spoken to Carole King, and added that he seldom communicated with any of his former musical protégés. "They've got their own life," he said. "And, unless it's a birthday, my kids, they want me to be a memory."



"Melissa, dear, it's the President. He'd like a word with you."

GLASS MENAGERIE

AN eighteenth-century greenhouse that provides flora for Venice's public gardens will be the home this spring, during the Biennale, to a thousand-pound glass sculpture of a dancer in a hundred and sixteen colors. But, however fine the spectacle, it is unlikely to bear comparison to the spectacle of its creation, this month and last, at the New York Experimental Glass Workshop, at 647 Fulton Street, in Brooklyn. The building—a former auxiliary theatre to the Brooklyn Academy of Music and, later, a bowling alley—came to resemble a volcano, in which a team of ten men and one woman from around the world gathered to work sand and soda ash, rendered molten by twenty-four-hundred-degree fires, into a phantasmagoria of glass. Their labors left every surface strewn with bananas, cherries, and pineapples, grapes and vines; with ribbons and roses; and with forms resembling breasts and buttocks, thighs and feathers, hands and feet, a tutu and bustier, all made of glass. The parts on the worktables began to look like the remains of some deconstructed tropical seductress. And that is what they ought to look like, for when the parts are fused together they will form a glass woman combining the attributes of Carmen Miranda, Josephine Baker, and the Hindu god Shiva in his dancing incarnation.



"Fill'er up with testosterone."

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Behind a scrim of heat and flame, before a backdrop of heavy metal pipes, chimneys, furnaces, and kilns, and to the accompaniment of the cooling fan's roar, syncopated by a shot of the propane torch and the drowning strains of rock music, the workers themselves seemed to dance the dancer's creation. Wearing sunglasses to protect their eyes from the heat and light, and suited up in aprons and facial heat shields, they spun and bowed, dipping long metal blowpipes into red-hot glass, pirouetting to present it to their Vulcan—Lino Tagliapietra, one of the world's master glassblowers—for him to blow, snip, twist, and mold.

Each day, visitors, television crews, and documentary filmmakers crowded into the workshop, taking front-row seats on the concrete floor, mesmerized by the spectacle. One observer said the team reminded him of a rock band "in a groove." Greg Morell, a metalworker, who made the steel armature to support the glass elements, remarked, "It's about as close as you get to making a movie. Everyone stands around until something is needed, and then flies into action."

The glass dancer, eleven feet high and seven feet wide, was born of discussions between Pedro Cuperman, an Argentine-born professor of Latin-American literature and semiotics, and Izhar Patkin, an Israeli-born New York artist. Cuperman, who studied philosophy in India, proposed the subject of Shiva. The god's arms reminded Patkin of a Venetian glass chandelier, and from then on he knew that his dancer would be made of glass.

Patkin, whose sculpture has long employed unorthodox materials, including anodized aluminum, rubber, and wax, toured the world to understand this new one. In Murano, he met with Tagliapietra, one of a handful of glass maestros there, and in 1991 he spent a month at Pilchuck, a glass-blowing school north of Seattle, which was founded in 1971 by, among others, Dale Chihuly, this country's best-known glass artist.

Karen LaMonte, of the Brooklyn workshop, visited Patkin's Ludlow Street studio many times before she agreed to help him with his project. "He melted my skepticism, but it was gradual," she recalls. Tagliapietra, in Italy, also proved difficult to lure to work on the project. "I think this is a bit crazy," he confessed. "But life can be pretty boring unless you try these things."

In mid-January, the Shiva was ready to blow. The team, including glass specialists trained in places as diverse as Australia and Sweden, assembled in Brooklyn. Tagliapietra had never worked in representational forms. He was a "vessel man," who made drinking glasses, bowls, vases. So when he snipped lines in a glass ball, the basis of any form, and drew out five fingers as if he were pulling taffy, the audience gasped. Even the Maestro seemed impressed by his creation. "I don't know. I just try," he said when he was asked how he did it.

On the last night of the project, Patkin and the others gathered in the apartment, on Sutton Place, of his dealer, Holly Solomon, for a pasta feast, and there Tagliapietra proved himself as much a master craftsman with flour and water as with soda ash and sand, as much a magician at the range as at the furnace. ♦

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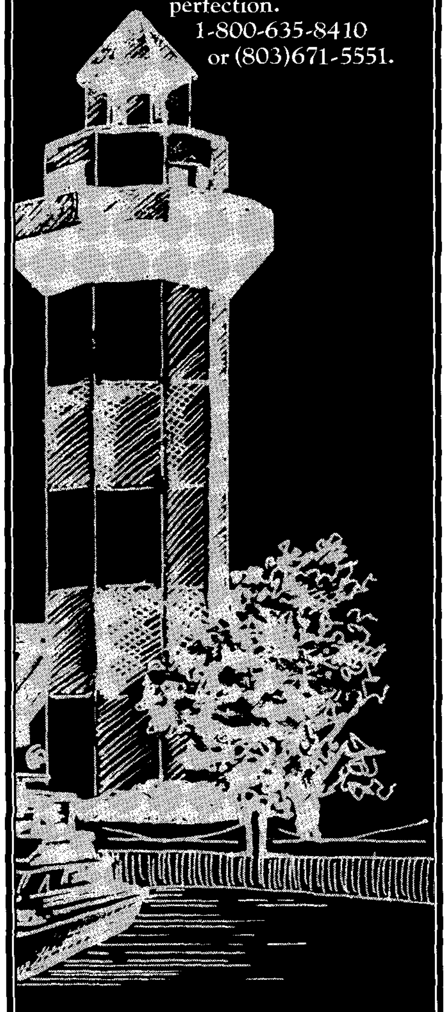

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

RENDEZVOUSING WITH DESTINY

While his tour of Hyde Park attests to Bill Clinton's personal identification with F.D.R., his own New Deal presents a very different style of Presidency.

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

BILL CLINTON, holding a red rose, stood at the foot of the grave. After laying the flower on boughs of pine, set like a blanket over the snow-covered burial plot, the President bowed his head for a moment, and walked to the side, facing the long, white marble stone:

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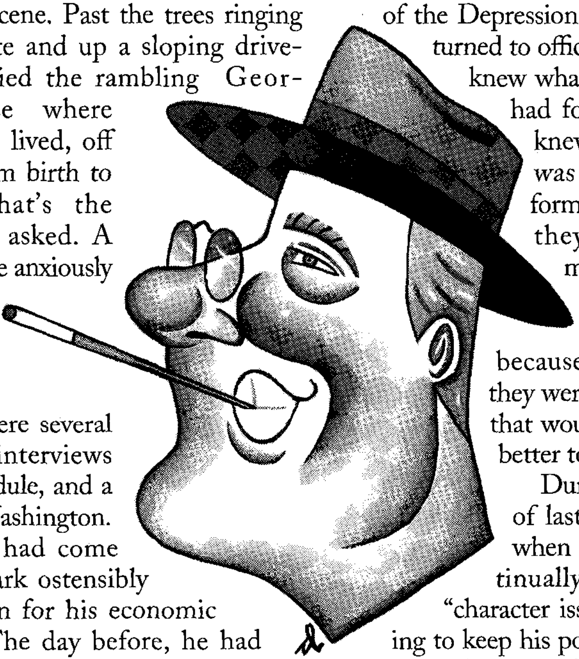
"Amazing," he said. "So peaceful." He craned his neck, trying to take in the whole scene. Past the trees ringing the gravesite and up a sloping driveway, he spied the rambling Georgian house where F.D.R. had lived, off and on, from birth to death. "That's the house?" he asked. A youthful aide anxiously explained that there would be no time to see it. There were several television interviews on the schedule, and a dinner in Washington.

Clinton had come to Hyde Park ostensibly to campaign for his economic program. The day before, he had been in St. Louis. Earlier on this day, he had been in Chillicothe, Ohio. In two days' time, he would be in California. But no other site matched the significance of this one. He had always said that his grandfather Eldridge Cassidy, a storekeeper in Hope, Arkansas, believed that when he died he would "go to Roosevelt." Clinton's kinship, therefore, was not to the squire but to "the forgotten man." The reverence he expressed for F.D.R. in his campaign was both a form of filial piety and an appeal to older voters who still nurtured the warmth of fireside chats. But his grandfather clause was more than a passing remark.



ROBERT DE MICHIELL

Clinton's best-remembered speech before 1992 was the interminable nominating speech for Michael Dukakis at the 1988 Democratic National Convention. ("In closing . . ." was the line that drew the greatest applause.) But Clinton also addressed the 1980 Democratic Convention. He was then thirty-three, a first-term governor, facing a difficult reëlection race, which he would lose. In that speech Clinton used the F.D.R. of 1936, the President who won reëlection, as a standard: "We were still in the teeth of the Depression. Why was he returned to office? Because people knew what sort of vision he had for America. They knew what action he was taking to transform the country. And they were willing, most important, to accept hardship for the present, because they believed they were part of a process that would lead them to a better tomorrow."

During the dark days of last year's primaries, when Clinton was continually flayed by the "character issue," and was trying to keep his poise, both the candidate and his wife read Geoffrey Ward's "A First Class Temperament," a biography of F.D.R. that took him from the day of his marriage to the day he was elected governor of New York, spanning his transformation from a shallow socialite into the man we know from history. Clinton had wanted to pay tribute to Roosevelt during his Inaugural festivities, but his planners could not create an appropriate event that could be squeezed between the tributes to other Presidents. It was not until his Inaugural Address that Clinton could pay homage, quoting Roosevelt: "Bold, persistent experimentation," he said, was what the country needed. It was a citation that

Clinton would flourish time and again, for it summarized his own method. This method is a pragmatism in which means have substance only by their ability to attain certain ends. "If it fails, admit it frankly and try another," Roosevelt said.

Now, for the first time in his life, Clinton was in Hyde Park. At the Haviland Middle School (begun as a New Deal construction, built by the Works Progress Administration), he spoke of how conquering private travails had equipped Roosevelt for engaging public ones: "I think of President Roosevelt in the depths of the Depression, having gone through his journey to cope with his personal problems, summoning interior strength and reserve to lift the nation's vision."

Clinton was scheduled to spend only an hour at the F.D.R. estate—a hit-and-run photo opportunity. There was not even a plan to tour the exhibits. But Clinton headed straight toward them. In the center of the library's modest exhibit hall, surrounded by a low wooden fence, are F.D.R.'s desk and chair from the Oval Office. Clinton circled the fence slowly. "It looks like he wants to climb over," whispered Paul Begala, his political adviser.

"I have Kennedy's desk," remarked the President, who had appropriated J.F.K.'s massive one for his own in the Oval Office. Roosevelt's desk is smaller, and Clinton viewed it from all angles. He was measuring himself.

After the television interviews, Clinton sat in the office of the library director, Verne Newton, under portraits of F.D.R., as his makeup was removed. Around him were his aides—and F.D.R.'s grandson James Roosevelt and Robert Kennedy, Jr., an environmental lawyer in the Hudson River Valley. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan was present, too, his vast knowledge readily on tap. Observing a map of the Hudson, Begala inquired about Roosevelt's interest in sailing, and Moynihan talked of F.D.R.'s summers in Maine and his career as an Assistant Secretary of the Navy. (Asked by a member of Clinton's entourage whether he had been to the Roosevelt library before, Moynihan replied, with Moynihanian emphasis, "I wrote my *dissertation* here." Its subject was Roosevelt as Wilsonian.) Clinton signed a guestbook, under the signatures of Winston Churchill and Lyndon Johnson. Once more, an assistant re-

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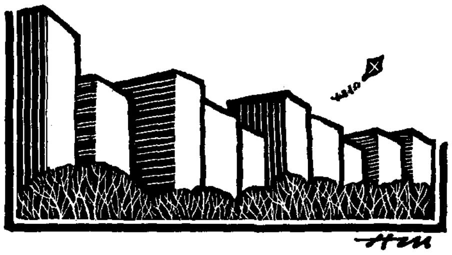
minded him of his pressing dinner engagement. Clinton got up. "Come on," he said, heading for the house.

As the group walked with the President, Moynihan pointed to a military officer carrying a briefcase. "See that man?" the Senator said. "He's carrying the football." The football, as it is known, contains the codes for nuclear warfare that must always accompany the President. Moynihan noticed that the man with the football was near the end of the entourage. "Ah," he said, "the Cold War is over."

Clinton opened the door to Roosevelt's home and stepped into the foyer, with its looming grandfather clock and F.D.R.'s stuffed-bird collection: he was transfixed, his eyes wide, his jaw slack. "I just love this," he said. The more Rooseveltiana he soaked in, the more he wanted to absorb. From room to room he shuffled, guided by a Park Ranger. On the landing was the elevator, hand-operated by a rope. Clinton, hopping in, pulled himself up and down. "It's really quite good. It'd be good for your arms," he said. And it was pointed out that it had been good for Roosevelt's arms, which he built up not only in the elevator but in his wheelchair. Clinton walked down the second-floor hallway, peering into the room F.D.R. had occupied as a boy, with its framed copy of the Declaration of Independence and its Harvard *Crimson* banner. Then there was the room in which Roosevelt had installed an ailing Louis Howe, his devoted amanuensis, who had once slept at the foot of his bed, like Fala, dreaming of little but the master. (In the many rooms in the mansion, this one seemed specially reserved for the historical interest of Clinton's trailing advisers.) One of the Park Rangers took the extraordinary opportunity of having a captive President to point out that repairs were needed. "Sir, if you'll observe the ceiling, you will see water damage," he said hopefully. Finally, Clinton came to the rooms in the far wing, overlooking the Hudson, which reveal more of F.D.R.'s private ordeals than any other. In the middle of his dressing room is his wooden wheelchair; in the closet, his vests and jackets are hanging neatly; his shoes are lined up on the floor. "Those are still his clothes?" Clinton asked. Putting it in the present tense framed the question oddly. Would Roosevelt return to find his things undisturbed? The question seemed more about mortality than about the wardrobe. At the end of the hall was a large room to match Franklin's. It was the room of Mrs. Roosevelt—not Eleanor but Sara Delano, the ubiquitous mother. Eleanor's room was sandwiched between the two, a plain box with a thin, single bed. The reality of the marriage was achingly clear.

Clinton was quiet, and then, walking toward the stairs, he spoke about houses. "The first house Hillary and I lived in had twelve hundred square feet. It could fit into one part of this house. The next house was even smaller. It had eleven hundred square feet. Then I lost, and we bought a big old house that I sold when I won again. We moved back into the mansion." The new occupant of America's most famous public housing unit played with a thought. "I'm homeless," he said. "I'm a waif."

It was F.D.R.'s class that defined his relations with people. He felt at ease in any setting, but he did so by first creating a distance between himself and those around him. In its way, his magnificent condescension was seen as his democratic touch. A good deal of F.D.R.'s sympathy for those below him (which included almost everyone) came from his polio. He disliked being alone, and his immobility made it necessary for people always to come to him. But he may not ever have had an equal relationship with anyone, and particularly not with his wife. Clinton, by contrast, radiates empathy more than sympathy. He is a plebeian who went to Oxford, and he is far more knowledgeable about economics and social policy than F.D.R. was. It was Oliver Wendell Holmes who remarked of Roosevelt that he lacked a first-class intelligence but had "a first-class temperament." Clinton, though he may prove to have both, operates in different times, in which the people are less deferential to a President, especially one who seems so accessible. Clinton draws on F.D.R.'s concept of the Presidency. Government, according to this model, is a positive instrument of change. The President, the only elected official who represents the whole country, must assert his idea of the national interest through policy. He acts as a broker, patching together congressional majorities and party coalitions, but ultimately never allows himself to be defined by the fragments. He never forgets that the Presidency is the unifying force.



For Clinton, the solutions of the industrial era do not ideally fit the new conditions. "Bold, persistent experimentation" does not mean repeating what Roosevelt did. Economic stimulus, the Keynesian pump priming that raises consumer demand, became the policy heart of the New Deal system. The postindustrial economy, however, is not a national but a global one, in which an upswing in the business cycle does not automatically bring about a return of working-class jobs. Rather, the economy hums along, having adjusted to higher levels of automated production with fewer employees. Left to drift, the living standards of those caught in the middle slip downward. In an age of mobile capital that respects no borders, the development of "human capital" and infrastructure must be a nation's first priority, according to Robert Reich, one of Clinton's friends from his Oxford circle and now the Secretary of Labor. This "investment," as Clinton calls it, may appear to be a Keynesian stimulus—and, indeed, it may have the same effect—but it is intended also as a larger reform. Clinton's program is contingent on his view of postindustrialism—a passage perhaps not as wrenching as the one from agrarianism to industrialism, but one requiring profound reform nonetheless. The invention of a postindustrial New Deal, however, requires means, and means are precisely what the President lacks.

Both Roosevelt and Clinton became Presidents in vacuums of leadership. Each was preceded by eight years of Republican orthodoxy, followed by four-year transitional figures who inherited the consequences. Bush played Hoover to Reagan's Coolidge. Although it was a portrait of Coolidge that graced Reagan's Cabinet Room, it was F.D.R. he called his true hero. Ironically, it is primarily Reagan as a Roosevelt manqué

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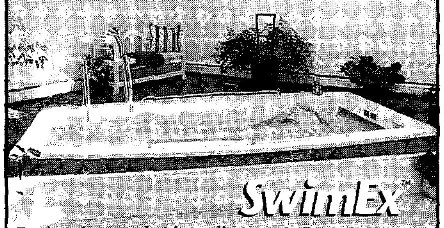

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that blocks Clinton from claiming F.D.R.'s mantle. In 1982, five years after Jimmy Carter declined to greet a reunion of New Dealers in Washington, Ronald Reagan staged a luncheon in the White House to celebrate F.D.R.'s centennial. He raised his glass in a toast: "Happy days, now, again, and always!" Young Reagan had been an ardent New Deal Democrat, who would entertain friends with imitations of Roosevelt's oratory. When he turned conservative, he claimed, "I didn't leave my party, my party left me." By reversing the New Deal as President, Reagan acted as if he were rescuing the real Roosevelt—with himself playing the lead.

Reagan's policy was to restore natural order by unleashing what he called "the magic of the marketplace." His plan was to be a full-fledged panacea. According to the tenets of supply-side economics, drastic tax cuts would produce a flood of federal revenues. Prosperity, like pixie dust, would be sprinkled from above. That the policy worked at all was due to its resemblance to the traditional Keynesian stimulus that it was advertised as supplanting. The revenues, however, never materialized. The effect was a spreading paralysis of the functions of the national government, which, as Reagan's budget director David Stockman pointed out, was the principal benefit. The result of Reagan's economic insolvency was to render George Bush politically insolvent. Bush, of course, never really believed in the panacea ("voodoo economics," after all, was *his* description), and he lacked the art to sell it as fairy tale. Bush had no aspirations to be Roosevelt, only to imitate the popularity of Reagan, the F.D.R. manqué. By then, however, the consequences of supply-side economics weren't a dream but a constricting reality. What destroyed Bush now confronts Clinton as a hurdle to overcome.

IN his first three weeks, it appeared on the surface—or, at least, the surface of the network news—that a succession of fumbles and gaffes might define the Clinton Administration, that the early days would be not a false start but a preview of eternity. They would hardly begin a Hundred Days comparable to F.D.R.'s. It was widely assumed that Clinton was filling his evenings with emergency meetings and his days with hasty explanations. But in his view these seemingly random fiascoes were not auguries of an ad-hoc Presidency. He had a sense of being at the beginning of a progressive cycle. Even snarled in the brambles of Baird and Wood, Nunn and Powell, Clinton had his own forward momentum rolling in his head. To him, the opening scenes were simply miscues.

The details of ephemeral events so easily overshadowed him because he stood starkly against the White House with no established past. "I didn't pick the timing," Clinton lamented to a senior aide about the backfiring issues. "If I could pick the timing, would I do this?"

Clinton assumed that he could resolve the most polarizing contentions through reasonable discussion—that his newly invested supreme power would be naturally recognized as he laid on the charm. In his efforts to legitimatize gays in the military, he proceeded delicately and respectfully, so as not to offend the top brass. He drew them to private conferences where the inevitable was explained. Clinton's miscalculation was his unaccountable idea that the other actors would not act but be content to be acted upon. His assumptions of deference and seduction were unwarranted. Perhaps no one inflicted graver damage than Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who over a period of weeks deployed a threat of quitting like an extended field maneuver. The effect was to avoid a direct engagement with the President while leaving him diminished and dust-covered. Still, Clinton almost succeeded in outflanking the General. Powell's ally was Senator Sam Nunn, of Georgia, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who wishes to represent the sentiments of the Joint Chiefs to augment his power. In the rapid mobilization before the Gulf War, Nunn had reflected their hesitance and doubt in his opposition to President Bush's course. Opposition to gays in the military brought Nunn and Powell together once again. Yet it seemed that the solidarity between them might break when, in a long night of negotiating, Clinton's deputies managed to win over Nunn's aides to an agreement that would settle the issue. But the next morning Nunn rejected the agreement out of hand. His distaste for gays in the military—he had also fired two gay members of his staff—seemed a principle overriding mere partisan loyalty.

Nunn's imperial veto was not mentioned by Clinton or his aides. The public knew nothing of it. Clinton, after all, still had to contend with the prickly Senator. Quickly, another compromise was cobbled together. Nunn would hold hearings, but the military would no longer ask recruits about their sexual orientation. The issue would be postponed for six months, during which time Clinton might hope that his political strength, drawn from elsewhere, would grow. Week One was over.

Clinton's second week was planned to illustrate his mastery. But on the day that he signed the Family and Medical Leave Act (twice vetoed by Bush, now swiftly re-passed) he was overtaken by accident. The Inauguration was over, but the transition went on. Federal judge Kimba Wood, who had been interviewed (though never formally nominated) for Attorney General in the wake of the Zoë Baird debacle, withdrew her name from consideration. Though Wood had done nothing unlawful—she had hired a nanny who was an illegal alien at a time when it was still legal to do so—her failure to provide the President's vetters with the details ahead of time persuaded them that she was ill equipped to navigate the political minefields of Cabinet service. With Wood's withdrawal, charges of ineptitude against Clinton mounted.

Clinton's early missteps as President deflected him only briefly. Unlike F.D.R., however, who orchestrated his players, one against another, in a game of "creative tension," Clinton aimed to achieve his plan through "teamwork." So he commissioned the head of the newly formed Economic Security Council, Robert Rubin, who was a former co-chairman of Goldman, Sachs, to oversee the development of his first economic plan. Rubin would act as taskmaster and traffic cop, lashing everyone forward and preventing head-on collisions. Clinton was intent on preventing any department or personality from gaining dominance. On December 30th, in Little Rock—even before the Administration-to-be had arrived in the capital—Rubin staged a five-hour rehearsal with all the principals in economic policymaking, in preparation for a meeting with Clinton. The President-elect was "ecstatic," one of his aides said. "It was his idea of teamwork."

On January 6th, Bush's budget director, Richard Darman, announced that by 1997 the deficit would be at least sixty-eight billion dollars larger than his own previous estimate. (There had been estimates in 1992 from the Congressional Budget Office and other sources that a bigger deficit was looming.) Politically removed as he was, assembling his government, Clinton was blamed for backtracking on his campaign promises, which had been founded on earlier numbers. At the same time, the business cycle began to rise, thus providing reason for critics to complain in advance that no "investment" was needed. The markets were giving him a vote of confidence without it.

Before this "bump," as one Clinton adviser called it, a document had been prepared for the President-elect by his top economic aides showing that he could lower the deficit by a hundred billion dollars, to about two hundred billion dollars, in five years without any tax rise on the middle class. Now more taxes were inevitable. Internally, deficit reduction gained velocity. The so-called "deficit hawks" prescribed that drastically reducing, if not eliminating, the deficit should be Clinton's No. 1 goal. "Pain" and "sacrifice" would be the means. The most vociferous hawks were in charge of the Office of Management and Budget. Budget director Leon Panetta, an abstemious but affable former chairman of the House Budget Committee, had long made deficits his cause. He had begun his career as a Republican, and had never abandoned his fiscal conservatism. He abhorred Reagan's deficits; to him, Reagan was a wastrel. During the 1992 campaign, Panetta had openly criticized Clinton for not taking deficits seriously enough, and in the summer he had presented a program to wipe them out within five years. Panetta's deputy was Alice Rivlin, a former director of the Congressional Budget Office and Brookings Institution economist, whose zeal on deficits more than matched his own. Rivlin, for her part, has told colleagues that during the campaign Clinton failed to propose strong enough medicine to deal with the fiscal crisis. Panetta made Clinton burst into laughter at one point, when he suggested charging fees for Coast Guard rescues. "Visa or Mastercard?" the President asked. Yet Panetta, who had operated quite well in the House, grasped the political difficulties. He fought until he lost, and then supported the consensus.

Meeting with congressional leaders at the White House on January 27th, the President's staff enumerated various policy options, which included Panetta's idea of freezing the cost-of-living increase for one year's Social Security benefits. Almost overnight, Senator Jim Sasser, the chairman of the Budget Committee, and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the chairman of the Finance Committee, announced that they would oppose it. Yet Clinton himself had never endorsed it. And he was furious. His message about "investment" and economic growth was being obscured by concern about the deficit. He disdained the editorials praising him for "sacrifice" and "pain." An adviser says that Clinton told him, "I get so mad at these people, these élites, who think it's inherently good to stick it to the middle class, when they've been the ones getting the raw end of the deal for the last twelve years. If we do this, it's because we have to." But Clinton became convinced by Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen and by Robert Rubin that long-term interest rates would fall if the deficit was cut. Long discussions with the Federal Reserve Board chairman, Alan Greenspan, buttressed their contention.

The politicos within the White House and those who had been in the campaign were inducted by the President to help clarify the confused themes. Stanley Greenberg, Clinton's pollster, presented research showing that most Perot voters interpreted "the deficit" to mean economic trouble in general. Meetings of the political advisers, which had been recessed after the election, reconvened in a variety of locations, from the Old Executive Office Building to political strategist James Carville's basement apartment office on Capitol Hill, which he calls the Batcave. Carville's partner, Paul Begala, was ensconced in a large room in the O.E.O.B. to oversee "the message." Clinton charged his communications director, George Stephanopoulos, and Rubin's deputy Gene Sperling with arguing the political case.

At a Cabinet meeting, a memo prepared by the political operation was distributed, obviously with the President's approval. It was headed "Talking Points on the Economic Plan" and it contained eight points, beginning, "1. This is an Economic Growth Package. It is not a deficit reduction package, or a shared sacrifice package or pain package. The first thing out of your mouth when you're talking about this package should be: '*President Clinton's Economic Growth Package will create jobs and increase incomes for millions of Americans* . . . ' then go on about the benefits that will accrue if we enact the package." The other points stressed that the package represented "fundamental change," was "fair and shared," and was "long-term." The word "contribution" was suggested as an alternative to the hawks' favorite, "sacrifice": "It sounds less painful, more voluntary, and has a patriotic ring to it, much like the NRA signs under FDR, which read 'WE'RE DOING OUR PART.' [Actually, they read "WE DO OUR PART."] It's important to remind people that from those to whom much has been given, much will be expected. In other words, the rich are finally going to pay their fair share." Riffing off the slogan that Carville had posted in the Little Rock headquarters, seemingly an aeon ago—"It's the economy, stupid"—the final point was "8. It's NOT the deficit, stupid. Reducing the deficit is not the end. It is a means to the end of increasing incomes and generating jobs."

Clinton's speech on the economy, to be delivered before a joint session of Congress on the evening of February 17th, was supposed to be ready for the government printer by noon that day. But as late as six that night, only three hours before he was to deliver the speech, it remained in unfinished pieces. The crowding of would-be speechwriters into the Roosevelt Room resembled the stateroom scene from "A Night at the Opera." Riding to the Capitol, Clinton was still revising his text. Once inside, he was ushered here and there. Then the doorkeeper bellowed "The President of the United States," and he marched to the podium. An encircling shield of teleprompters showed him his text, but he treated the scrolling words as notes, improvising about forty per cent of his first full-length speech to the nation on the subject of most importance to him.

This was the performance he did not give when he nominated Dukakis, the one he never delivered in accepting his own nomination, the one the country awaited at his Inauguration. It was a triumph. Clinton made a coherent case for making the government "fully solvent," for looking "beyond the business cycle," for cutting the deficit, not for its own sake but so that "government can make the kind of investment we need." "I believe government must do more," he declared unabashedly. The words may appear abstract, but he had not given such a vibrant performance since the campaign—perhaps not since New Hampshire, when only sheer will pulled him through. Interruptions by applause, seventy-seven times, covered the disjointed transitions in the speech. Its lack of poetry helped convey a new message. For twelve years, no budget that a President had sent to the Hill had been taken at face value. Cynicism about content and about the debasement of Presidential rhetoric was assumed. Clinton's unadorned language conveyed a rejection of what had become known as "rosy scenarios." Yet his animation and aggressiveness precluded dullness, and were startling to the Republicans. Suddenly, he was imbued with power. The terms of debate would now be set by Clinton, not by Reagan.

Clinton left the hall to travel across the country, seeking to turn his plurality of forty-three per cent on Election Day into a majority for his program. Before he gave his address, according to a CNN-*USA Today*-Gallup Poll, a new energy tax was opposed by more than two to one; after the speech, those who watched it were in favor of the tax by three to two. Before, most were against an increase in the percentage of Social Security that could be taxed; after, most were for one. Before, Americans were about evenly divided on whether Clinton would reduce the deficit; after, two-thirds of viewers believed he would. Before, about half thought that Clinton's tax increases would be unfair; after, only twenty per cent thought so. Though the plan, according to one of the key participants, was formulated with virtually no reference to Ross Perot, it apparently made a great impression on those who had voted for him. Clinton, for his majority, must win over slightly less than half of Perot's supporters. Clinton's brandishing of the deficit, combined with assertive leadership, gained the backing of sixty-one per cent of them for his plan. But all these numbers will mean nothing if Clinton cannot use them to produce congressional majorities.

UNLIKE every other President since Roosevelt, Clinton must deal with a world in which the Cold War is no longer a rationale for anything. For forty-five years, every domestic initiative was justified, either directly or indirectly, by reference to the long twilight struggle, from expressways (under the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways) to college loans (the National Defense Education Act). Even civil rights was argued as essential to American prestige in the international arena. The Cold War also served as our industrial policy, though never explained as such; there was a constant government stimulus, targeting industries and fostering millions of jobs, all under cover of patriotism. But, just as reform was advanced by the Cold War, so was it halted by it. The two openings for reform since Roosevelt were closed, first under Truman, when the Korean War overtook him, and then under Johnson, when the Vietnam War destroyed liberalism for a generation.

Domestic reform without a background of overwhelming foreign crisis has not been attempted in sixty years. The economic crisis that Clinton confronts is more subdued and long-term than the one that F.D.R. faced, making support harder to mobilize. The New Deal was modelled on the mobilization of the First World War, but war cannot be Clinton's paradigm. Clinton must strive to create an industrial policy to replace the Cold War, yet he must first find the means to meet his ends. Solvency itself is not the end but only that which makes all else possible.

In the dark at Hyde Park, as Clinton was leaving, he was exhausted but exultant. One of those present remarked that it had been a good week, and that it was fitting to end it here. "Yes," the President said. "I belong here." ♦

PERSONAL HISTORY

THE DARK AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS

Revisiting the innocent fears of a London childhood

BY A. ALVAREZ

[illegible]

WHEN I was a child, I was terrified of the dark. I remember this as a historical fact, but the terror itself faded long ago, and there are times now when I feel its disappearance as a loss, as some vividness gone out of my life. "Brightness falls from the air," wrote Thomas Nashe in a time of pestilence. As you get older, fear, too, falls and vanishes, and that is not necessarily an unqualified blessing. The other darkness, the dark at the end of the tunnel that Nashe was writing about—"I am sick, I must die / Lord have mercy on us!"—has never bothered me much, perhaps because I have never thought of it as more than extinction, a final full stop. But there was nothing final about the darkness that frightened me as a child. On the contrary, it was teeming with possibilities, all of them undesirable.

Start with the house: built just before or just after the First World War, semi-detached, red brick, and pleasantly proportioned, with two mournful bay trees in tubs flanking the front door; a solid and spacious interior, stained-glass windows in the hall, beautifully turned banisters, heavy doors, everything fashioned to last and no expense spared. My parents moved there in 1930, when I was six months old, and both of them were still there when they died—my father in 1965, my mother in 1982. By the time my mother died, she and her ancient housekeeper-companion were the only occupants, and the place had gone to seed: the top floor shut, dry rot in the casements, fungus in the cellars. But during my childhood the house swarmed with people, all of them now dead: my parents and my two sisters, a nanny, a cook, and two parlormaids, as well as an undernurse, who stayed for a year when one of my sisters was ill, and my father's chauffeur, who lived elsewhere but was constantly in and out.

It was a three-story house, and each story was a separate world, clearly demarcated. The ground floor—two fat Ls, joined together, three rooms to each L—was strictly for the grownups. The front L—dining room, drawing room, and conservatory—belonged to my parents. The rear L was the servants' quarters: a pantry, where the glasses, crockery, and silver were kept and the maids washed them; a kitchen, where the servants ate their meals and put their feet up (it was the only continuously warm room in the house, because it contained the coke boiler that heated the water system); and a scullery, where the cooking was done—red stone floor, twin gas ovens, a sink large enough to drown a sheep in, a big enamelled metal table with a huge stoneware jar of cooking salt, a long, narrow walk-in larder. All this was the domain of Minnie, the cook; my mother was not welcome there, my father never went near it, and we children were allowed in only with Minnie's permission, which was given rarely, under sufferance, and as a special mark of favor.

We lived upstairs in the day nursery, a sunny room overlooking the garden, with built-in cupboards, child-size armchairs, a friendly gas fire, and a large oak table, silvery from constant scrubbing,

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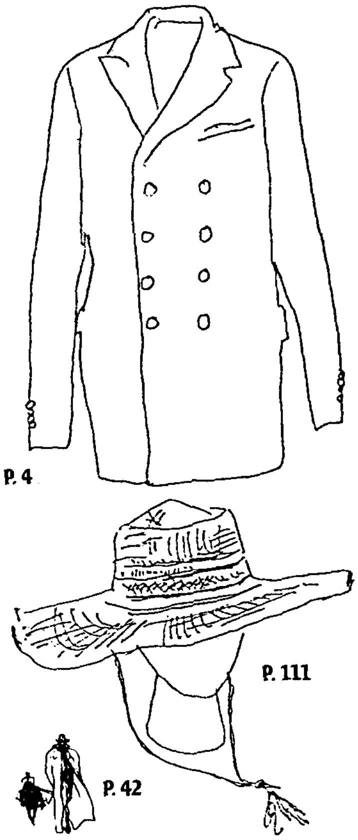

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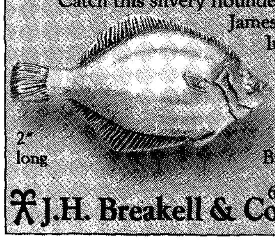

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where we ate, under Nanny's beady eye. My parents' bedroom and a big bedroom shared by my sisters were on the same floor as the day nursery—at the front of the house, separated by my father's dressing room. The night nursery, which I shared with Nanny, was on the top floor; like my sisters' bedroom, it ran from the front to the back of the house, with views onto both the garden and the street. Across the landing from the night nursery was Minnie's bedroom and a poky little room where the two parlormaids slept. There was a bathroom on the top floor for the children and the servants; my parents had their own bathroom, on the floor below.

Now, of course, it seems unimaginable that a middle-class Jewish family should lead this style of "Upstairs, Downstairs" life. The domestic class barriers and carefully marked-out spheres of influence (the "Keep Out" and "No Trespassing" signs were invisible, but we obeyed them scrupulously) and the abiding sense of Them and Us—the sheer formality of it all—seem more than implausible now, or unreal; they seem downright exotic, like the glories of the vanished Raj or the court of the Sun King. These days, you would need to be a millionaire to maintain a houseful of servants and the life that went with them. But between the wars, when wages were low and appearances cost less, the middle classes still managed to live with some of the grandeur their Victorian parents had taken for granted. (I read somewhere that during the nineteen-thirties about a third of Britain's population was in domestic service.) For a child, the relationships may have been a little remote by modern standards, but, to compensate, life generally was sheltered and orderly. In other words, nothing wrong there, no obvious terrors to send the pulse racing.

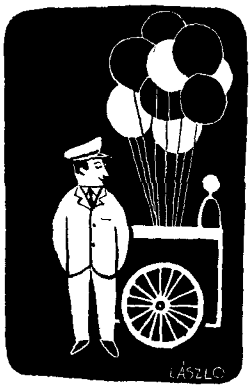
Christopher Robin I emphatically was not. I was a nasty little child, the only son and much younger than my sisters: indulged, unpredictable, prone to tantrums and ill health. When I was a baby, I had had major surgery to remove a lymphatic growth from my ankle. But the operation had not been successful, the growth remained to trouble me, and my lymph system sporadically went haywire, giving me fevers, a good deal of pain, and an unpleasant disposition. I assume that the operation had also produced traumas of its own, some little shop of horrors whose contents I glimpsed only occasionally and imperfectly. Today, I would have been classified as a disturbed child and treated accordingly, but things were ordered differently in the early thirties. Fear of the dark was just one of my symptoms.

There were other conflicts in the house, seething just below the surface, and my own conflicts must have amplified them. First, there were the regional domestic politics. We children were used in a continual power struggle between nursery and kitchen, between Nanny, who favored me, and Minnie, who favored my sisters. Like all petty tyrants, they adopted the method of divide and rule. They set us at one another's throats, to jostle for small favors and a place in the sun, which meant that in those days there was no love lost among the three of us. (Affection came much later, after we left home and made our own separate lives.) Nanny was stern, but not toward me—because I was delicate, because I was *her* baby. (She had arrived just after I was born, and had lived with me in the hospital when I had my operation, a very rare procedure in those days.) Nanny made my sisters' lives a misery, while Minnie indulged them and terrified me. She had a wicked temper and an artistic temperament—she was an inspired cook—and, because she was deaf, she spoke in a whispering, hissing voice. She also had a finger missing from one hand—a detail that filled me with dread. Until I met her again, many years later, I thought of her as huge and menacing; in reality, she was small, almost fragile, and the whispering voice made her sound chronically shy. In my childhood, however, she was like the cook in "Alice in Wonderland": she ruled the roost, she brooked no contradictions and no interference, and she terrorized my mother and the maids as much as she terrorized me.

We didn't see much of our parents. Like Minnie with her kitchen, Nanny considered the nursery her exclusive turf, and was skilled at keeping my mother off it. And my mother, because she had been tyrannized by her father and her own nanny, assumed that this was how the world was ordered, and kept docilely to her own ground-floor territory, where she drank endless cups of lemon tea and gossiped with her cousins. Occasionally, I would be brought down for their inspection, and most evenings I would be brought down again, in pajamas and dressing gown, bathed and combed, to say good night to my father. Until the Second World War broke out, a month after my tenth birthday, and we found ourselves suddenly thrust together without a buffer zone of servants, both my parents were remote figures, who seemed only tangentially connected with my life.

But I heard them from a distance. The power struggle between nursery and kitchen was a daytime activity. At night, a different reality took over, and it had nothing to do with territory or middle-class decorum. Instead, the house was permeated by the sound of adult unhappiness. Or, rather, it was permeated by two sounds, which added up to the same thing: marital rancor and classical music. Separately, my parents were good-hearted people, funny, generous, and full of feeling. But they were highly neurotic in their different ways, and fatally ill-matched. My father was a romantic, a great reader of travel books, a lady-charmer with a serious and educated passion for music. My mother loved food and dogs, but she was tone-deaf to music and utterly uninterested in the printed word. She was also a realist, hiding behind an eccentric façade a shrewd and sardonic view of the field of folk and its subterfuges. Both of my parents were under the thumbs of their domineering fathers, and both had to wait until their fathers died to lead their own lives without forever looking over their shoulders. It was a long wait: my father's father lived to be eighty-six; my mother's father, not to be outdone, made it to ninety-three. Until they left the stage, my parents took out their frustrations on each other and channelled their affections elsewhere—my mother into a series of ill-tempered terriers and spaniels, my father into girlfriends and music.

As a child, all I knew about was the music. My father had a vast collection of records, and he played them very loud after dinner—partly for pleasure and relief, partly to shut my mother out. Most evenings, the sound of his music rose through the house, mixed with the sounds of their unhappiness: blurred voices shouting at each other, weeping, recriminations, and once—just once, as I remember—the sound of a blow followed by an explosion of grief. I used to sneak out of bed and listen to their distress rising confusedly up the stairwell. Always at night.



So night, I reasoned, was the time when adults showed their true natures—not something any child wants to know about. By extension—the same thing in different terms—it was also the time when monsters were abroad: ghoulies, ghosties, and things that go bump in the night. I have had children of my own, and they have told me about the apparitions that haunted their nights. There were marks on the wall by my daughter's bed that transformed themselves, when the lights were out, into the face of a ghost so scary that she could sleep only with her back to the wall. She and her older brother shared a bedroom when they were small. In a corner of the room was a little fireplace. The chimney had been blocked off, but the cast-iron Victorian fire basket and the chimney breast were still in place, and the space between them, which had once led to the chimney, was inky black. It was a small space, not much more than a foot square, and my son seemed terrified by it when he was very small. He used to stare at it as though he were afraid it would suck him up and engulf him forever. For years, I thought that the blackness itself was what frightened him—that he was afraid of the night within him as much as of the night about him. Not so, he told me later. His fear had a specific shape: squat, shaggy monsters covered with squiggly electric black hair. The monsters appeared to him regularly in nightmares, and he was transfixed by the fireplace because that, he thought, was where they lived.

He was also afraid of what he later referred to contemptuously as "the standard shit"—snakes and other nasties waiting under the bed to snap at his toes if they stuck out from under the blankets. In the same vein, when my small daughter and her friends wanted to scare themselves they would whisper together about vampires and all the similar cloaked or bat-winged creatures that might materialize out of the night, sink fangs into their tender necks, and suck their blood. There were probably other bogeys, other fears, but they were always creatures with the shapes and attributes—teeth, claws, leathery wings—of the kind that Bram Stoker might have written about or Bosch painted.

As a child, I must have populated the darkness in the same fashion: with witches hissing like Minnie, burglars under the bed, murderers lurking, ready to pounce, in the partly opened cupboard. Yet I remember nothing at all about them—not a single sinister face or flapping shape. My fear of darkness was a fear of dark places: of the cavernous linen cupboard on the landing outside the night nursery; of the attic above the landing, with a skylight no one ever opened; of the trapdoor in the maids' room, which gave onto four steps down and a tight space full of dusty trunks and old suitcases. Above all, I was terrified of the cellars. There were three of them, at the bottom of a flight of wooden stairs behind a narrow door in the front hall. The main cellar contained an ancient wooden icebox and a large marble slab below a wire-mesh window that led upward to a barred window giving on the garden. A door next to the slab led to a wine cellar that never had wine in it, because my parents rarely drank. At the other end of the main cellar was another door, opening into the coal cellar, into which sacks of coal and coke were dumped via a chute in the front garden.

The darkness of the cellars frightened me, but the spiders that haunted that darkness frightened me far more. My terror of spiders was phobic—overwhelming and unreasoning—and it

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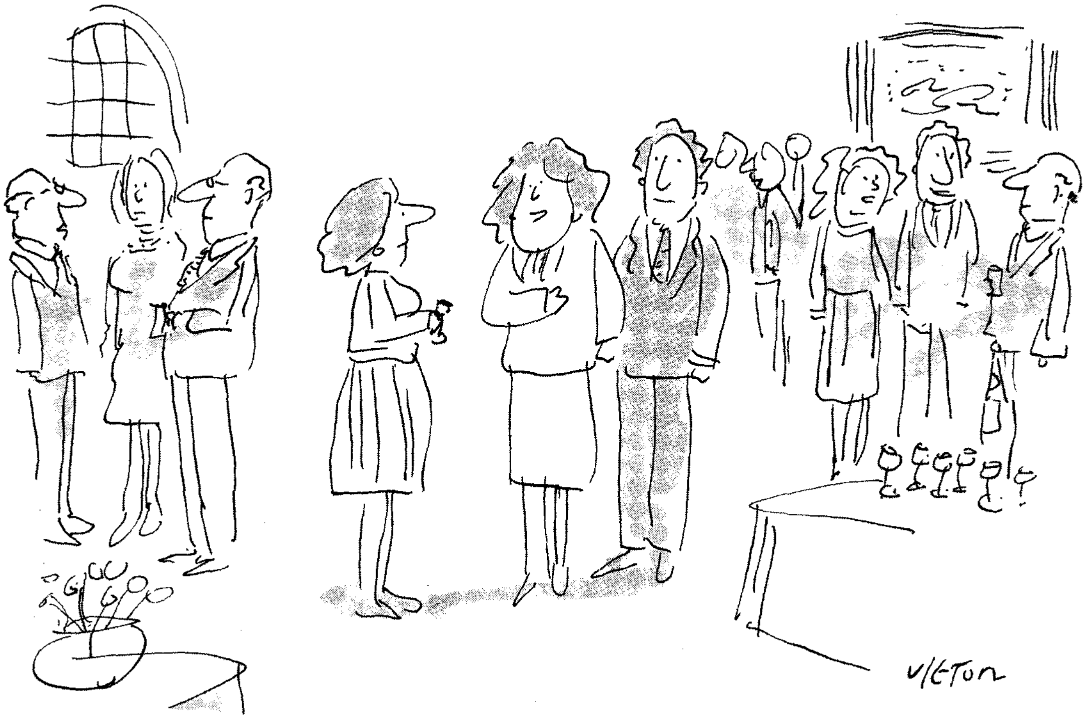


"I'm Mrs. Keenan, and this is my opponent, Mr. Keenan."

outlasted my fear of darkness by several decades. Spiders seemed to me creatures that embodied, in their scuttering way, everything that was evil and venomous and impossible to escape. They were emanations of darkness itself, and I was well into middle age before my phobia modified into qualified unease.

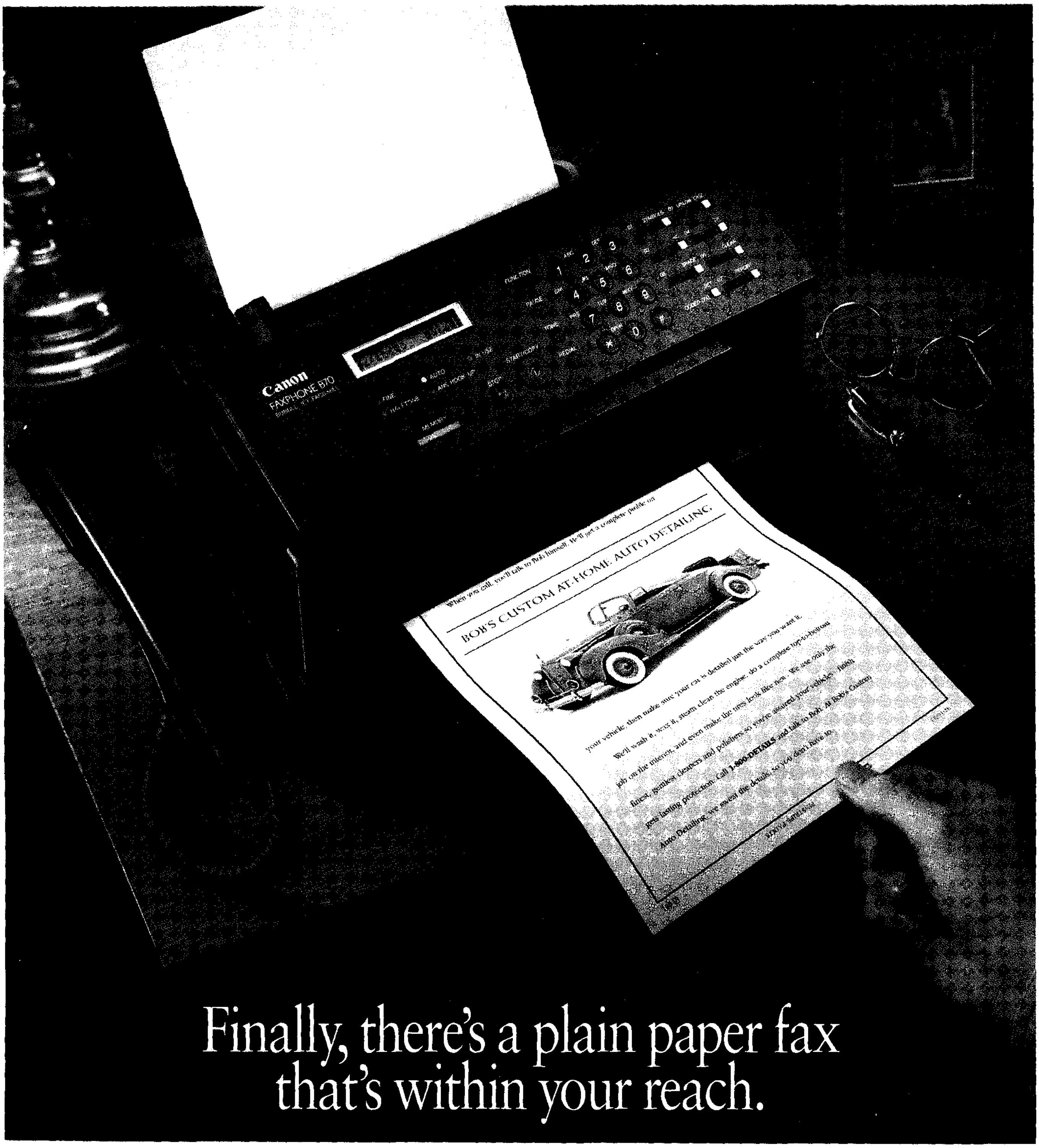
When the house was full of servants, the main cellar was regularly swept and dusted. Even so, there were always spiderwebs in the corners of the ceiling, and the unused wine cellar was full of them. But, for obvious reasons, no one ever swept the coal cellar, and its blackness was festooned with webs. My mother kept the old boiler going long after everyone else had installed central heating, and even after I was a grown man my stomach tightened whenever I went down to fetch up a scuttle of coke for her. I drew in my head, hunched my shoulders, and kept my eyes rigidly to the front, in case I might see what I didn't want to see.

Spiders, cellars, attics, all those dark and secret places: an old-fashioned psychoanalyst would make a meal of them. Fear of women, I assume, and whatever fantasies of being castrated, devoured, and annihilated seemed appropriate. Modern psychoanalysis is subtler, less schematic and reductive, but if the occasion were right some of the same anxieties might seem to apply. And why not? After all, it was a house full of women. When I was little, my father was around hardly at all. While my sisters and I ate our breakfast in the day nursery, he had his alone, in state, in the dining room. Sometimes he would put in an appearance upstairs around our bedtime, but mostly we were brought down to see him—briefly. And, because life with my mother hadn't turned out how he had hoped, there was always something hesitant and uneasy about him; he seemed like a bird of passage yearning to be off to more interesting and sympathetic climes.

So I spent my days surrounded by women—seven women, to be precise, and all of them, including my sisters, much older than I was. I was literally the odd man out. I was also a disturbed, difficult, and demanding child. My sisters, Minnie, and the maids found me hard to take and easy to resent, and my mother, as I discovered when my own children arrived, was never much good with small children—not that Nanny allowed her the chance to practice on them. So, of those seven women, Nanny was the only one I loved and trusted wholeheartedly. The others were separate, confusing, and vaguely hostile, and therefore, no doubt, fascinating in a slightly scary way. In the circumstances, it seems reasonable that dark places should have frightened me. I couldn't wait to get out into the male world, and I mark the beginning of a kind of happiness from the moment when I was finally packed off to a strenuous boarding school.

Blaming the women of the house is one cheapjack explanation among many. Another, equally simplistic, is that maybe my own nastiness scared me, resounding back from the darkness. But I wonder if these aren't just excuses, like the vampires and the burglars—trivializations of a dread that is far more archaic, deep-rooted, and universal. Children put shapes and faces to their fear of the dark, and these shapes may be full of private meaning, dipped in what Henry James called "the deep well of unconscious cerebration." But the real fear is of darkness itself, and perhaps it is instinctive. Perhaps, that is, children are born with traces of primitive man's terror of night and the horrors it held for him, just as a new-hatched songbird will instinctively cower if the shadow, or the simulated shadow, of a hawk goes over it. As civilization, with its contents as well as its discontents, gradually takes over, the fear, like the monsters, fades away.

Spiders apart, I no longer remember how I populated the darkness that made me sweat with fear when I was small. But I remember the fear itself, and particularly my fear of the darkness that shrouded the upper floor, where I slept—the dark at the top of the stairs. When I stood on the landing outside my father's dressing room, the darkness seemed to fill the top floor even in broad daylight and roll down the staircase like fog. There were three light switches at the foot of that staircase: for the hall light below, for the second-floor landing, for the top-floor landing. Once I was tall enough to reach them, I always made a point of switching on the top light before I went upstairs, even on sunny days. Three-quarters of the way up was a small landing where the staircase turned ninety degrees. I used to pause there to summon up my courage,



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and always took the last six steps in a rush. I did not feel safe until I was across the top landing and had the door of the night nursery shut tight behind me. Later, when I was a schoolboy, and was afraid of being seen to be afraid, I managed to disguise my panic, moderate my pace, and go upstairs sedately and—I hoped—resolutely, as if I hadn't a care in the world. But it was all a fake.

ONE DOZEN
Judith Shahn

The truth is that night contains whatever you care to put into it, and, because you can't see, or can see very little, it gives your imagination unlimited space to work in. The psychoanalyst W. R. Bion used the phrase "nameless dread" to describe the meaningless fear that overwhelms an infant whose mother fails to contain his terrors and make them meaningful:

> The patient feels surrounded not so much by real objects, things-in-themselves, but by bizarre objects that are real only in that they are the residue of thoughts and conceptions that have been stripped of their meaning and ejected.

Whence the ghoulies and ghosties, the bizarre objects and misshapen creatures of nightmare. The best ghost-story writers know that by night fear is a free agent, which will fix on anything that comes to hand. In M. R. James's "Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad," the creature, whose "one power was that of frightening," embodies itself in a sheet from an empty bed and confronts its victim with "a face of crumpled linen." In "The Treasure of Abbot Thomas," a plump, mildewed leather bag slides forward and puts its arms around the narrator's neck:

> I was conscious of a most horrible smell of mould, and of a cold kind of face pressed against my own, and moving slowly over it, and of several—I don't know how many—legs or arms or tentacles or something clinging to my body.

Nothing is definite, nothing precise. Evil is a free-floating force and can inhabit the most commonplace objects. Fear of the dark is essentially unspecific; like darkness itself, it is formless, engulfing, full of menace, full of death. The rest is child's play: naming the demons (Satan, Beelzebub, Hecate, Lucifer) and filling in the details (fangs, claws, bats' wings, goats' horns, toad's skin, dragon's tail) are ways of sanitizing the nameless dread, of containing the uncontainable. In horror movies, no matter how brilliant the special effects, the moment when the monster is finally revealed is invariably a disappointment. The creature from the black lagoon or the morgue or the pit or outer space is always easier to live with, however dangerously, than the nebulous shapes created by the imagination running free. Once you can put a face on evil, it becomes, in Hannah Arendt's word, banal.

Now that we have light at our command, at the flick of a switch, we have become connoisseurs of nocturnal fear, and keep it constantly on tap as entertainment: horror movies, pulp novels, shock comics tailored for all age groups. It is also out there on the streets every night: the freaks and muggers and addicts; the U.F.O. visionaries, Satanists, religious fundamentalists, and political crazies; the ghouls, terrorists, and perverts. The great insomniac *passeggiata* of the modern city is a walking validation of our instinctive belief that night is the time when things go wrong and lurch out of proportion, the time when values get turned around and daylight rules no longer apply.

Part of the primitive fear of darkness is connected with what happens to us when we sleep. Not only are we vulnerable to intruders and predators. We are also vulnerable to our dreams: to their obdurate strangeness; to the irrationality that seems normal at the time, even inevitable; to the overpowering terrors, griefs, rages, and triumphs we did not consciously know we had. And beneath all this there are other, more deeply buried anxieties.

According to Bruce Chatwin, for example, there is a concrete, historical reason that darkness and evil are inextricably linked in the human mind. For the harried and besieged first men, he suggested, the routine horrors of the night—vulnerability, loneliness, and cold—were compounded by a malign predator with a taste for human flesh. In "Songlines" he quotes Robert Brain's hypothesis in "The Hunters or the Hunted?" that there was "a specialist killer of the primates" called *Dinofelis*, "the false sabre-tooth." Chatwin writes:

> *Dinofelis* was a cat less agile than a leopard or cheetah but far more solidly built. It had straight, dagger-like killing teeth, midway in form between a sabre-tooth's and, say, the modern tiger's. Its lower jaw could slam shut; and since, with its slightly cumbersome build, it must have hunted by stealth, it must also have hunted by night. . . . Its bones have been unearthed from the Transvaal to Ethiopia: that is, the original range of man.
>
> Could it be, one is tempted to ask, that *Dinofelis* was Our Beast? A Beast set aside from all the other Avatars of Hell? The Arch-Enemy who stalked Us, stealthily and cunningly, wherever we went? But whom, in the end, we got the better of?
>
> Coleridge once jotted in a notebook, "The Prince of Darkness is a Gentleman." What is so beguiling about a specialist predator is the idea of an intimacy with the Beast. For if, originally, there was one particular Beast, would we not want to fascinate him as he fascinated us? Would we not want to charm him, as the angels charmed the lions in Daniel's cell?
>
> The snakes, scorpions and other menacing creatures of the savannah . . . could never have threatened our existence, as such; never have postulated the end of our world. A specialist killer could have—which is why, however tenuous the evidence, we must take him seriously.
>
> "Bob" Brain's achievement, as I see it—whether we allow for one big cat, for several cats, or for horrors like the hunting hyena—is to have reinstated a figure whose presence has grown dimmer and dimmer since the close of the Middle Ages: the Prince of Darkness in all his sinister magnificence.

IN his elegant way, Chatwin is doing for the false sabre-tooth much the same thing that Peter Benchley did for the great white shark in "Jaws": using it to give shape and fearful presence to everybody's buried fears. The death-dealer that hunted primates by night and the shark with a taste for human flesh are both embodiments of an archaic terror. That terror lingers on in the child's instinctive fear of the dark and of the malign forces that darkness hides. The terror fades as the child gets older, because, among other reasons, he learns to manipulate it by playing scary games in safety, in the cinema, at home with a book or a video—by turning it into a source of titillation and thrills and perverse enjoyment. Another form of manipulation and control, Chatwin seems to be suggesting, is abstraction. *Dinofelis* became extinct, but man, with his gift for language, gradually transformed the memory of the terror that the creature once inspired into the concept of evil,

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turning the Beast that killed by night into the Prince of Darkness, creating morality from fear.

Scientifically, Chatwin's theory is almost certainly farfetched; there is no sure proof that the false sabre-tooth was a specialized man-eater. But it makes poetic sense as a description of the etiology of good and evil. In other words, if the creature had never existed, we would have had to invent it, since it corresponds to powerful forces in the human mind. Forces, for instance, like this:

> [It] creates a sensation in the mind of being watched by eyes from which nothing can escape. These eyes are cruel, penetrating, inhuman and untiring. They record without mercy, pity, or compassion. They follow relentlessly and judge remorselessly. No escape is possible, for there is no place to shelter. Their memory is infinite and their threat is nameless. The punishment when it comes will be swift, poisonous and ruthless. . . . Added to this feeling of being constantly watched and threatened there is also the sense of being acutely listened to, smelled, and even having one's thoughts read, which gives some idea of the terror and hopelessness produced. These sensations create in the subject of their implacable scrutiny a feeling of being totally surrounded by irresistible forces which close in on them from all sides like the Iron [Maiden] of mediaeval tortures or the contracting room of Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum."

It sounds like everybody's worst nightmare, whatever name it comes under: Big Brother or false sabre-tooth or great white shark—a creature, incidentally, that never closes its eyes to sleep and can scent blood across miles of ocean. The description is, in fact, written by a psychoanalyst (A. A. Mason) and portrays the superego in its most rampant and sadistic form. Yet the same analyst, in the same article, also wrote:

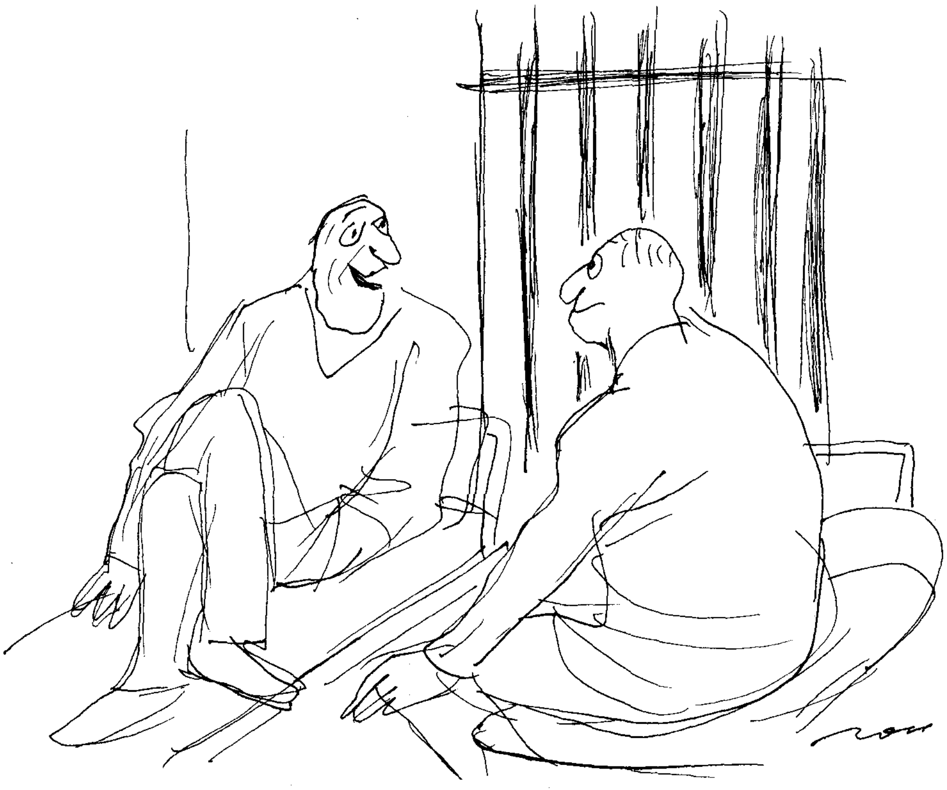
> The upright stance and the development of speech, along with the presence of the super-ego [are some] of the attributes of man that [have] raised him above the animal kingdom. This structure is responsible for his conscience, his morals, his ethics, his religion, and his esthetics. It is the source of all his spiritual aspirations and endeavors.

In other words, the superego is the basis not just of conscience but of all mankind's higher values. As Freud originally defined it in "The Ego and the Id," in 1923, the superego was a derivative of the Oedipus complex: an image of the parents installed in the child's mind, controlling it and threatening punishment. Ten years later, Melanie Klein refined this idea and made it more subtle by suggesting that the child was continually adding to this original internal image by projecting into it his own violent fantasies. In this way, the superego becomes a composite force based partly on external reality—the parental figures or the child's imagination of them—and partly on the child's own frightening or intolerable internal states.

The process that Klein describes is complicated, but the essential point is relatively simple: the harshness of the superego is not necessarily founded on external reality, and does not come about solely because the parents are harsh or because the child's distorted image of them makes them so or, as Freud also suggested, because it is based on some distant memory of the vengeful father of the prehistoric primal horde; it comes about also because the superego is filled up with parts of the child's own nature. The infant, that is, cannot tolerate its own sadistic, devouring, stifling fantasies, so it projects them onto the external world. But, once projected, they become so overwhelming that in order to control them the infant reintrojects them into the superego, where they terrorize and persecute it. Terror is a two-way street. Long before the infant can register or understand the objective dangers and malice lurking in the outside world, it can be frightened out of its senses by the violence of its own impulses, by its own imagination. The psychoanalyst Susan Isaacs wrote:

> A little girl of one year and eight months, with poor speech development, saw a shoe of her mother's from which the sole had come loose and was flapping about. The child was horrified, and screamed with terror. For about a week she would shrink away and scream if she saw her mother wearing any shoes at all, and for some time could only tolerate her mother's wearing a pair of brightly coloured house shoes. The particular offending pair was not worn for several months. The child gradually forgot about the terror, and let her mother wear any sort of shoes. At two years and eleven months, however (fifteen months later), she suddenly said to her mother in a frightened voice, "Where are Mummy's broken shoes?" Her mother hastily said, fearing another screaming attack, that she had sent them away, and the child then commented, "They might have eaten me right up."
>
> The flapping shoe was thus seen by the child as a threatening mouth, and responded to as such, at one year and eight months, even though the phantasy could not be put into words till more than a year later. Here, then, we have the clearest possible evidence that a phantasy can be felt, and felt as real, long before it can be expressed in words.

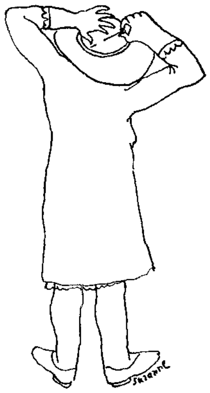
In terms of the psychic terror they are capable of inspiring, there is nothing much to choose between *Dinofelis*, Jaws, and an old flapping shoe. In one form or another, they are all devouring mouths, and, as the case of the frightened little girl shows, to experience the terror it is not necessary either to have seen a de-



"I've always been a free-lancer. Organized crime never appealed to me."

vouring mouth or to be able to describe one. The fantasy and the horrors it inspires predate the reality.

They also predate practically everything else, since fantasies of this type, according to Klein, are inspired mostly by the infant's earliest experience at the breast. They fade, they change, they modify with time, but at some fundamental level they remain embedded in the psyche's structure. In full-blown psychosis, they sometimes emerge powerfully and in their most primitive forms, but traces of them appear in less disturbed patients and also, as faint as the ghost of *Dinofelis*, in the passing fancies of perfectly normal people. Ghost-story writers, even the apparently sanest of them, keep a permanently open hot line to these primitive fantasies. At the turn of the century, M. R. James, Provost of Eton, and an Edwardian grandee, wrote a story in which a scholar of witchcraft, who is being hexed by an enemy, reaches under his pillow for his watch:



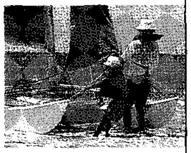
> What he touched was, according to his account, a mouth, with teeth, and with hair about it, and, he declares, not the mouth of a human being.

About ninety years later, a troubled little boy, in treatment at a London clinic and not yet able to read, told his therapist a terrible nightmare: the pillow he was sleeping on ate his head. Given a certain cast of mind, primitive fantasies, nameless dread, and bizarre objects are unchanging and democratically available to everyone, regardless of age, education, and social standing.

Daylight, with its routines and busyness, keeps these fantasies mostly at bay. But at night, when the external world is hidden, common sense loses its points of reference, and there is space for less amenable figures to make their presence felt. As every ghost-story writer knows—including the author of "Hamlet"—evil spirits walk only after sunset and fade "on the crowing of the cock." Does it follow that you need to have a punishing superego and a highly developed sense of evil to remain frightened of the dark as an adult? Or do you need only a highly developed awareness of the forces of darkness in your own psyche? Or is it the weight of the past bearing down, loosening your grip on reality? John Cheever wrote in his journals:

> B. tells me Fred [Cheever's brother] is suffering from something that happened to him before his adolescence and I think it may have been my birth. I have tried for years to uncover the turning point in his life but this had never occurred to me. This is a clinical or quasi-scientific disclosure, but it seems to me as rich as any other revelation. I can readily imagine it all. He was happy, high-spirited, and adored, and when, at the age of seven, he was told he would have to share his universe with a brother, his forebodings would, naturally, have been bitter and deep. They would have been deepened by the outrageous circumstances of my birth. I was conceived mistakenly, after a sales banquet. My mother carried me reluctantly and my father must have been heard to say that he had no love in his heart for another child. These violent scenes must have given great breadth and intensity to his own conflicts. His feeling for me was always violent and ambiguous—hatred and love—and beneath all of this must have been the feeling that I challenged him in some field where he excelled—in the affections of his parents. I have felt for a long time that, with perfect unconsciousness, his urge was to destroy me. I have felt that there was in his drunkenness some terrible cunning.
>
> Here then are three worlds—night, day, and the night within the night. Here are the passions and aspirations of the dead, moving freely among us with malevolence and power. Here is a world of open graves. Here is a world where our imagery breaks down. We have no names, no shapes, no lights, no colors to fill out these powers, and yet they are as persuasive as the living. Out of his window he can see the city shining in the light of day and he adores it but he will be motivated less by his vision than by his remembrance of a scream heard in a dark stairwell fifty years ago. They seem to destroy him and to counsel him to destroy me. We seem to be at one another's throats. We hear the lashing of a dragon's tail in the dead leaves, the piteous screaming of a child whose eyes are plucked out by a witch, we smell the damps of the snake pit.

The night within the night and the bizarre objects that fill it come in all shapes. A woman who was scared of the dark told me a nightmare she had had when she was eight years old. Her family house had a spare room, unused except when she and her friends played there. In her dream, she went into the spare room, pulled open the top drawer of a chest of drawers, and found a man's hand lying in it. There was nothing gruesome about the hand—no blood, no claws, no unnatural hairiness, no sign of its having been severed. It was horrifying



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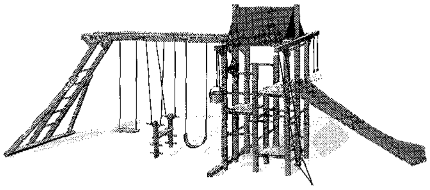

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for no other reason than that it was utterly unexpected. She woke screaming, and it was months before she would go back into the spare room, even in company and in broad daylight. This had happened at the end of the Second World War, when her father was away in the Army, and the only man in the house was her grumpy, alcoholic grandfather. Years later, she wondered if maybe her grandfather had ever tried to grope her when he was drunk. If so, it was not an incident she could remember.

The woman is now a successful middle-aged lawyer—attractive, energetic, happily married—and she is still afraid of the dark. Whenever she is alone at night, she shuts all the windows, even in high summer, checks the locks on the doors more often than is strictly necessary, and leaves all the lights on. She turns off her bedside light when she settles down to sleep but keeps the bedroom door open onto the well-lit landing. Because she is a practical woman, full of good sense, she does not believe in ghosts. It's not the supernatural that scares her, she says; it's the flesh-and-blood monsters out there on the streets, the drifting psychopaths, burglars, and rapists, waiting to take advantage of other people's weakness and inattention.

"We've installed an electronic burglar alarm," she says. "Now I'm nothing like so worried."

"So you turn the lights out when you go to bed?"

A shrug. An embarrassed smile. "Not exactly."

As for me, I wish I could remember my childish nightmares. They might be a way of recovering something valuable, a whole area of feeling I seem to have mislaid. But all I can come up with is an image from a movie: Spencer Tracy's face in the first transformation scene in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"—the features melting like wax, the lips curling back, the teeth becoming sharp and dangerous, the respectable doctor deliquescing into a monster. The film was released in 1941, so I must have been eleven or twelve when I saw it—on the edge of puberty, that is, and too late for childish nightmares. Yet it gave me screaming nightmares for months, maybe years, after. On some deep level, I suppose, I must have recognized the process, if not the face. Sadistic, destructive Mr. Hyde corresponded to some obscure image of myself, to impulses I was scared of and preferred not to acknowledge.

The fact that Jekyll was a doctor also helped. My parents had a knack for picking sadistic family doctors—the kind who took pleasure in lancing infected wounds without bothering with a local anesthetic. Added to that was the surgery on my ankle, which had presumably caused me a good deal of pain. Not that I could remember it, but I did remember clearly a medical incident when I was five or six. I had just started prep school and was clamoring to be allowed to play football. The doctors had forbidden it, on the ground that my ankle was too delicate and vulnerable, so my mother took me to Harley Street to see a famous specialist. Dr. Cumberbach was a jolly Pickwickian figure, plump and reassuring, with a florid face and gray curls. He sat me on a high padded stool in an office full of gleaming medical machinery and examined my leg gently for a considerable time. Then he said, quite tenderly, "You can play games if you really want, but if you get that ankle of yours kicked you might have to have your leg off." I suppose I was terrified, but I was also outraged, and the practical effect of his warning was to make me disproportionately foolhardy on the sports field. It also provoked in me a fear and distrust of doctors that I have not yet wholly overcome. No matter how agreeable and efficient they may appear, I am always waiting for Mr. Hyde to show his ugly face.

The year of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was the year of the London blitz, when night brought different and more obvious dangers: air-raid sirens wailing, the steady rise and fall of bomber engines (the radio news announcers talked about "waves of bombers," and that was how they sounded), bombs whistling (you learned from their sound to judge their closeness with great precision), the thump of the anti-aircraft batteries on Primrose Hill, planes pinned against the night sky in a latticework of searchlights, the eerie glow over London the night the City caught fire. (I watched it from the night-nursery window until my distraught mother found me and hustled me downstairs.) At school prayers one morning, after a particularly gruelling night raid, the headmaster told us to change the words of the morning hymn from "O Father, for another night of quiet sleep and rest" to "O Father, for just one night . . . " He was not normally a sympathetic man or strong on humor, but, for once, he had caught the spirit both of his audience and of the moment.

For a few months, while the blitz lasted, London was a good place to be. There used to be a Cockney joke popular enough to be inscribed in poker work on ornamental wooden panels and sold in souvenir shops, along with postcards and sticks of rock, at seaside resorts like Margate: " 'Cheer up,' they said. 'Things could be worse.' So I did and they were." It summed up all the qualities that usually make London so trying for outsiders—the inertia, the gloom, the resignation. But during the blitz these were transformed, under pressure, into a grumbling, good-humored stoicism, which even the children shared. It was as though we had all been enrolled in some easygoing grownup army, with only two important rules: Don't panic and don't complain. We collected shrapnel, we compared notes on how close the bombs fell to where we lived, we were sniffy about using air-raid shelters, we explored the shells of bombed-out houses, looking for trouble but pretending we were looking for treasure. And when there were casualties they did not properly register, since for most children the idea of death is more or less meaningless.

It was obviously different for adults, and it might have been different for us, too, if more bombs had fallen on northwest London or if the raids had come later in the war, when the technology of terror had been improved. As it was, the blitz was a period of wild excitement. The disruption and squalor and constant shortage of food—four ounces of butter and one ounce of cheese a week, one egg a fortnight—mattered much less to schoolboys than the nightly ration of danger. Real danger, not make-believe. For me, this excitement is fixed in an image: the brilliant aerial ballet performed, during daytime raids, by the

Spitfires, Hurricanes, Messerschmitts, and Heinkels. It was more than exciting, it was also beautiful, and it hooked me forever on the adrenaline high.

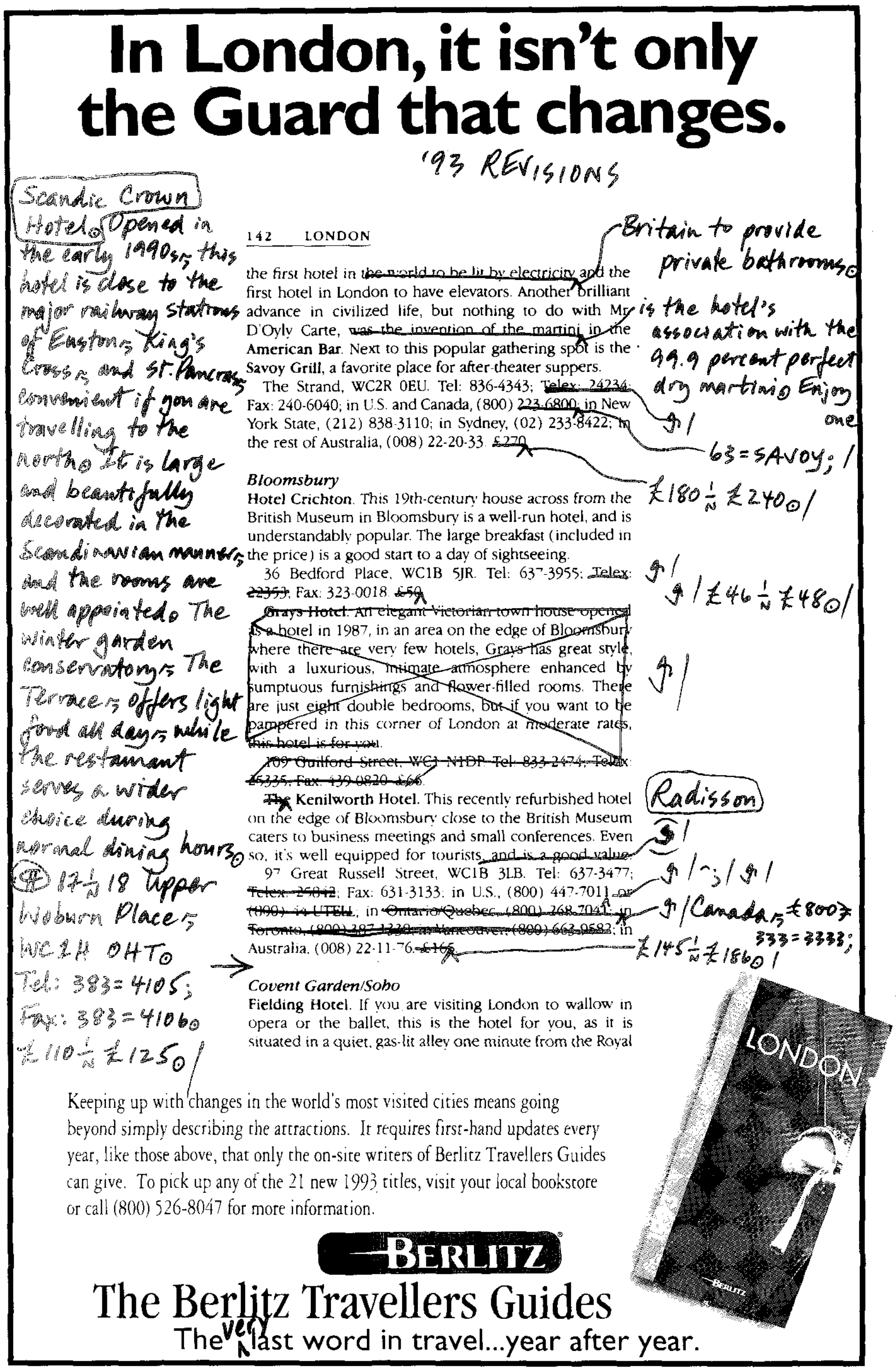
It also cured me of my fear of the dark. Bruno Bettelheim, who had been a prisoner in Dachau and Buchenwald, pointed out that seriously disturbed people—especially paranoids—seemed to lose their symptoms, and even to cope quite well, in the concentration camps, because the horrors of everyday life effortlessly outstripped those of their internal worlds. Maybe this was also true for me, on a miniature scale: when every night brought violence and the threat of death without any intervention on my part, there was no longer any need for me to be afraid of my own night within the night.

Whatever the reason, I like darkness now. I enjoy moving around the house with the lights off: the familiar shapes of the furniture shrouded in shadow, the red eyes of the burglar alarm blinking as I pass, the sound of a tap dripping in the kitchen or the rain against the windows, the tangled shadows cast by the street lamps on the ceiling. I like the privacy, the sense of being alone and unseen, even when my wife and children are sleeping quietly upstairs.

Wallace Stevens wrote a poem about reading alone at night that begins:

> The house was quiet and the world was calm.
> The reader became the book; and summer night
> Was like the conscious being of the book.
> The house was quiet and the world was calm.

When I first read that, I thought it was about communion or communication, about the way night intensifies the silence and absorption of the act of reading: the neutral shadows at the edges of the lamplight are a kind of *cordon sanitaire* separating the reader and his book from the world outside, making them one in their single pool of light. I see now that in Stevens' world night itself is a part of that serenity, a comforting third presence, equally important. There was a time when I could never have conceived that Stevens might be right, that the terrors of my childhood would vanish and night would be consoling and a great deal more peaceful than day. I wouldn't want those terrors back, but sometimes I miss them. ♦



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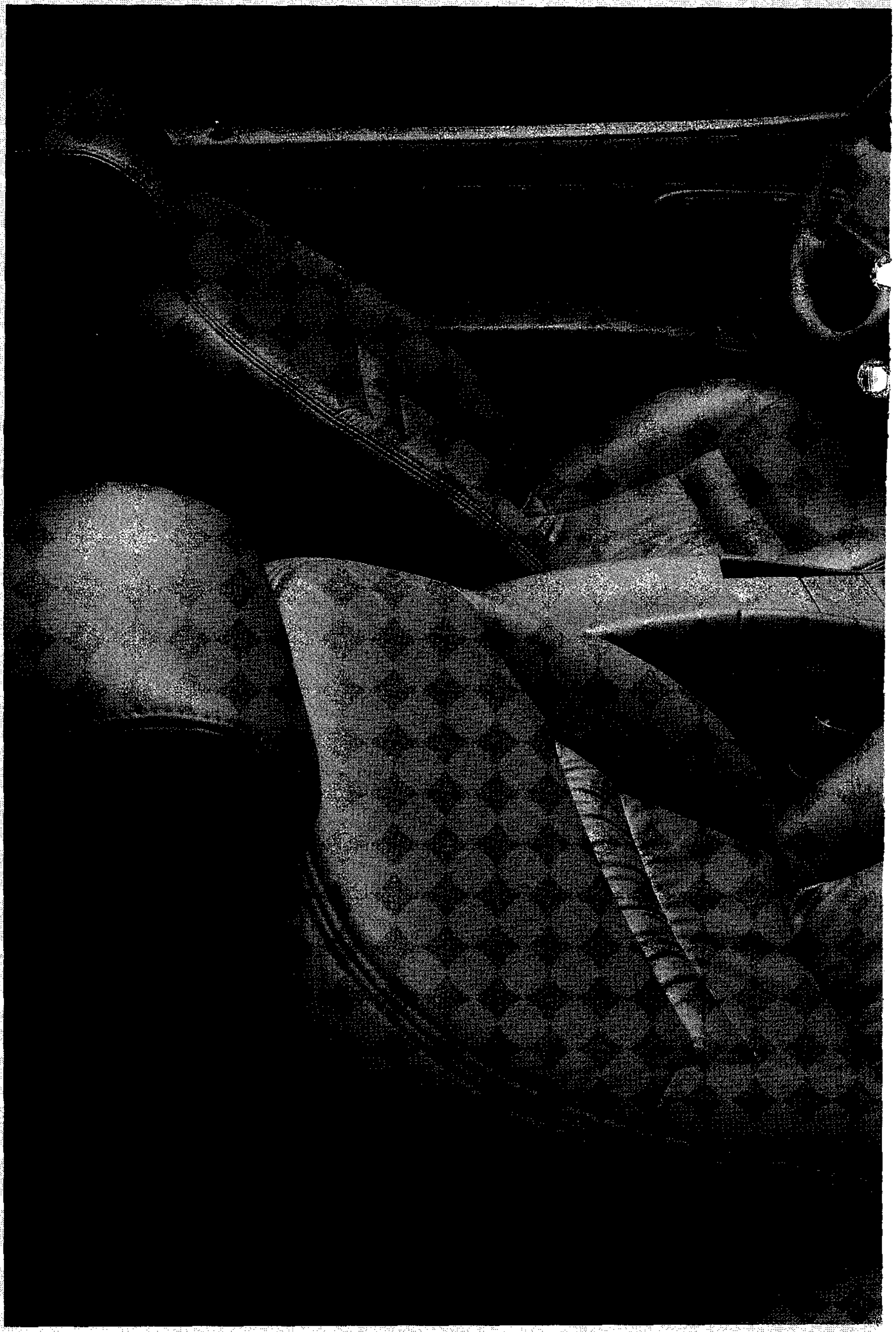

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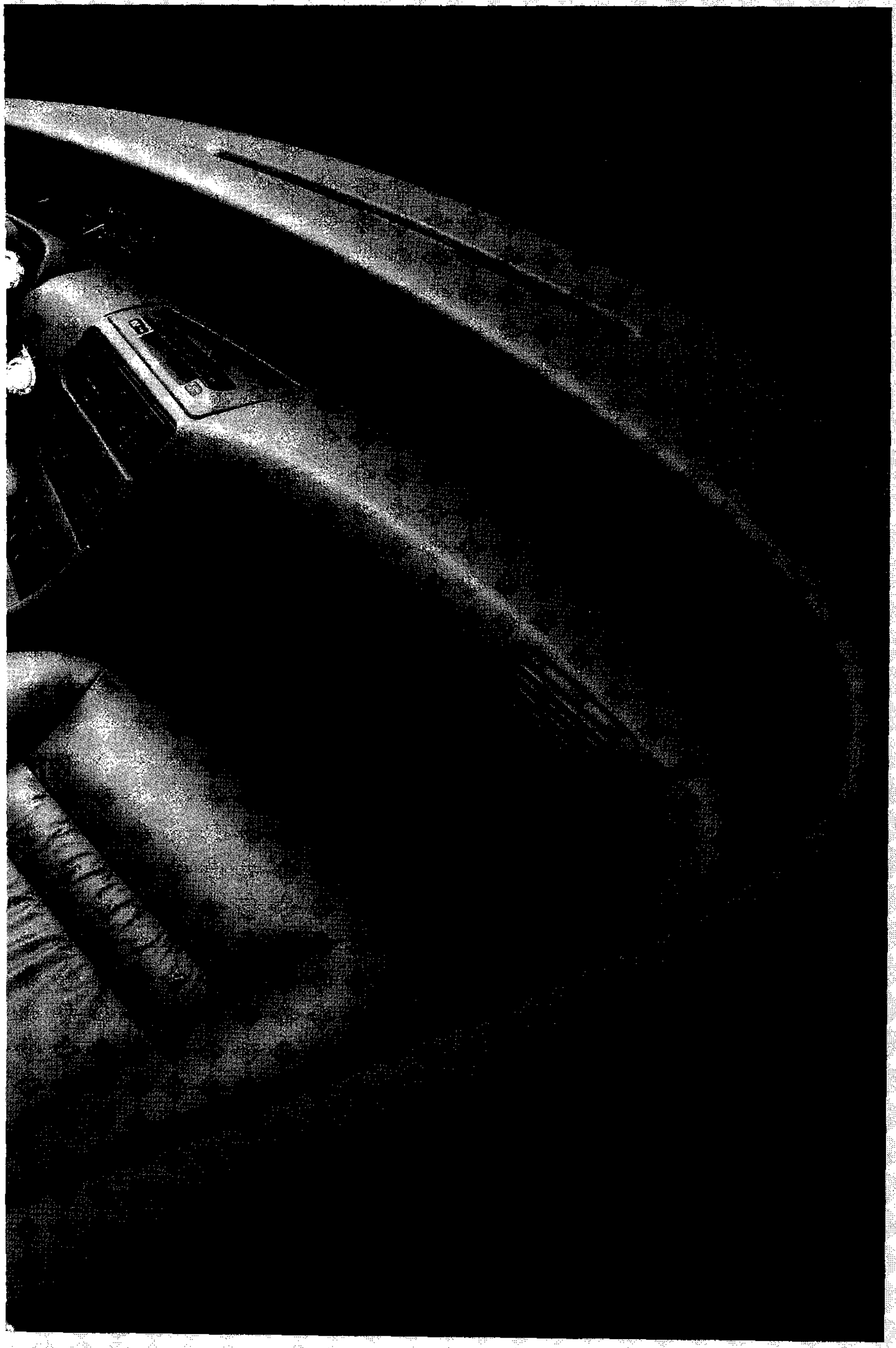

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ANNALS OF LAW

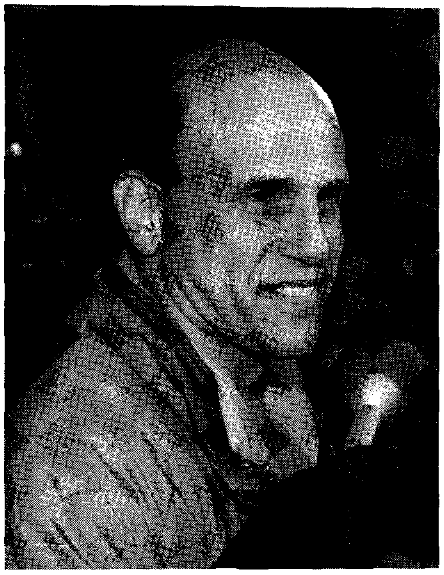
MICHAEL MILKEN'S BIGGEST DEAL

Before Judge Kimba Wood was publicly rejected for the post of Attorney General, she was vilified for reducing her ten-year sentence on Michael Milken, who goes free this week. Secret dealings between the government and Milken's lawyers—which not even Judge Wood knew about—help explain the puzzling dénouement of America's biggest white-collar-crime case.

BY JAMES B. STEWART

LAST spring, as a ruling on Michael Milken's motion to reduce his prison sentence neared, Judge Kimba M. Wood, of the United States Federal District Court, deliberated at length over the decision. Nineteen months earlier, the judge, theretofore all but unknown, had been hurled into a national controversy when she sentenced the former junk-bond king to a ten-year prison term on six counts of violating federal securities and tax laws. Because Judge Wood was both new to the bench, having been appointed by President Reagan in 1988, and relatively unfamiliar with criminal law, having practiced as an antitrust lawyer with a large Manhattan corporate law firm, she had steeped herself in the sentencing practices of the court and engaged in extensive discussions with officials on the Parole Commission prior to pronouncing sentence. On the occasion of the sentencing, on November 21, 1990, she gave an unusually detailed explanation of the reasoning that had led her to impose the ten-year term—a sentence she viewed as moderate for crimes such as Milken's. Nonetheless, she was roundly criticized by Milken supporters in business and in the media for being unduly harsh.

The decision whether to reduce Milken's sentence was even more complex, since it was necessary to take into account such issues as Milken's coöperation, or lack of it, with law-enforcement authorities; the often conflicting goals of Milken's rehabilitation; and the deterrence of similar crimes in the financial community. This time, Judge Wood did not issue her ruling at a public hearing. Instead, in a seven-page written opinion, issued on August 5th, she outlined her reasoning and simply ruled that Milken would be eligible for parole after completing two years of his term. Since Milken began serving his sentence on March 3, 1991, he would be free this week. But if Judge Wood hoped that this approach would forestall criticism she was wrong. Angry letters from all over the country poured into her courtroom—letters that must have left her deeply troubled.



Milken: He agreed to help prosecutors, but his "substantial assistance" has led to no new indictments.

Typical was a letter written by a naval officer. Addressed to Judge Kimba "Spineless" Wood, it read:

> Were you bribed or threatened?
>
> I'll go to a country club jail for two years for a billion. . . . Milken's reduced sentence will encourage more theft on Wall Street with such a feeble reprimand.

Another, from a Tacoma, Washington, man, read:

> I can't believe you reduced the sentence of that crook Michael Milken. How much did Milken pay you?
>
> P.S. I wonder if you ever think about the reasons the man on the street has lost faith in the judicial system in America.

Many of the letters sounded the same themes: that money buys leniency; that Judge Wood must have been bribed or otherwise improperly influenced; that the message to Wall Street is that crime pays. For Milken had by now come to stand for what many Americans most resented about the eighties and the recession that followed. From his infamous X-shaped trading desk in Beverly Hills, the former high-school cheerleader had by 1986 built junk bonds into a $125 billion empire and turned his firm, Drexel Burnham Lambert, into the most feared name on Wall Street. He'd funded those who couldn't get money anywhere else, from genuine entrepreneurs, like William McGowan at MCI Communications, to a slew of corporate raiders like the Miami financier Victor Posner, who plundered companies to the point of bankruptcy. Milken himself was paid five hundred and fifty million dollars by Drexel in 1986—more than some countries' gross national product. He was linked to the savings-and-loan scandal, to insurance insolvencies, to the banking crisis, to hostile takeovers that threw thousands out of work. He was rich almost beyond belief. In the words of Richard C. Breeden, the chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Milken had "violated many of the most important provisions of the securities laws of this country," and his "violations were deliberate, pervasive, and flagrant." And, finally, he seemed essentially unrepentant.

Thus, the notion that Milken will complete his sentence this week—still in possession of a fortune that some believe to be in excess of a billion dollars—has outraged many and baffled even more. The recent announcement that he is suffering from prostate cancer may generate sympathy but is unlikely to mitigate the lingering sense of injustice. How could Judge Wood, who so firmly and resolutely sentenced Milken to ten years, have been persuaded to reduce his sentence? What had happened since November of 1990 to account for the dramatic reduction in Milken's prison term? And, finally, what does this say not only about Milken's legacy but about the government's ability to prosecute large-scale financial crimes?

KIMBA WOOD is now a household name, partly because of Milken and, more recently, because of her ill-fated near-nomination as President Clinton's Attorney General. But on the November day in 1990 when Judge Wood appeared in one of the courtrooms of the Federal Courthouse on Foley Square for Milken's sentencing, virtually no one present knew just who she was or what to expect of her. She'd been on the federal bench only two years, and had presided over few criminal cases from which one might glean any tendencies. She looked younger than her actual age, which was forty-six, and she spoke with elaborate courtesy and great deliberation. In the mostly masculine world of federal courts and high-powered law firms, these qualities not only were unfamiliar but were interpreted as soft, even gentle, suggesting a possibly lenient approach to sentencing.

The fact is that Judge Wood hadn't got where she was by being soft and gentle, though in her demeanor she often seems so. She graduated from Harvard Law School in 1969, when only six per cent of the class were women. She had gone on to specialize in antitrust law at LeBoeuf, Lamb, Leiby & MacRae, and had become a partner. Not only has the antitrust bar long been dominated by men—in contrast to, say, trusts and estates or pension benefits—but one of Wood's most important clients, St. Regis Paper and Bag, operated in one of the toughest industries in the country: paper. From lumberjacks to hard-charging salesmen, paper companies were almost stereotypically male-dominated. She had endured her share of sexist remarks and behavior.

More significant, her involvement in the paper companies had taught Wood important lessons about the deterrent effect that criminal prosecutions can have on an industry. Like the securities laws that would fell Milken, the antitrust laws have criminal counterparts. In the nineteen-seventies, a series of notorious price-fixing cases involving folding cartons, paper boxes, and other products had swept paper companies into criminal prosecutions. In one of the most dramatic outcomes, the president of Container Corporation of America, which was not a LeBoeuf client, was sentenced to prison. Although the term was only fifteen days, it had a strong impact on the industry: Wood saw to it that her clients took the law seriously. When, as the antitrust lawyer representing St. Regis, she lectured salesmen on what kinds of price discussions with competitors were permitted, they listened.

As Wood approached the Milken sentencing, deterrence must have been much on her mind. Milken's lawyers had repeatedly made the point that much of what Milken did was pandemic on Wall Street during the eighties; his lawyers could always cite the examples of insider traders who had preceded him in prison, such as Dennis Levine, the Drexel Burnham Lambert managing director who took $12.6 million in illegal profits before cutting a deal with prosecutors, and Ivan Boesky, the megalomaniac arbitrageur who parlayed a seven-hundred-thousand-dollar loan from his wife's parents into a three-billion-dollar investment firm. Wood had conferred extensively with two officials at the U.S. Parole Commission, who advised that in Milken's case—since it involved securities-related felonies, which are nonviolent crimes, and since he was a first offender—the guidelines indicated a prison term of between thirty-six and forty months.

Ordinarily, coöperation on the part of a defendant is one of the most important considerations in sentencing, and the Southern District of New York has traditionally offered generous rewards for coöperation. In drug cases, where defendants often risk their lives by implicating others, it isn't unusual to waive all of a lengthy prison term in return for coöperation. Milken's attorneys, in some of the stickiest bargaining over his agreement to plead guilty, had refused to begin his coöperation until after his sentencing; nonetheless, his agreement was still characterized as one involving coöperation, and his lawyers argued strenuously that he should be given credit for his anticipated help—a peculiar, if not audacious, request.

In the course of the original plea bargaining, the government had won an agreement from Milken allowing it to introduce evidence of additional crimes for consideration at sentencing—that is, crimes that Milken had not pleaded guilty to. However, before the actual sentencing Milken's lawyers demanded the right to contest these additional allegations, and on October 11, 1990, a month before sentencing, Judge Wood convened a so-called Fatico hearing (named after the defendants in the 1979 precedent case that had established that right). Judge Wood ordered the government to pick a limited number of additional charges and present evidence for them, giving Milken's lawyers the right to rebut them. After hearing evidence for two weeks, Judge Wood found that the evidence suggested that Milken had obstructed justice—by his role in the disappearance of documents related to an illegal scheme with a Milken client—but she ruled that the prosecution had failed to prove the other felonies. Even if other felonies had been proved, the parole guidelines would still have suggested a maximum forty-month term.

All this, however, was far from the minds of the Milken family and their lawyers as they gathered in court the morning of November 21, 1990, for the sentencing. Milken was seated with his lawyers Arthur Liman and Martin Flumenbaum, of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison. In the row just behind him were his wife, Lori; his mother, Ferne; his brother Lowell; and his closest friend, Richard Sandler, who also served as his lawyer. In their minds, the sentencing issue had already been settled, at the time of Milken's guilty plea, in April.

Theoretically, Milken could have been sentenced to as much as twenty-eight years for the six felonies. But at the plea, reading from a script that had been the subject of intense negotiation between the prosecutors and the defense, the lead prosecutor, John K. Carroll, stated publicly that the government would not seek consecutive sentences for Milken's six fraud counts. Such a statement was all but unprecedented in the Southern District. Nonetheless, Milken and his lawyers had considered it a "deal breaker"—without such a statement, there would be no guilty plea. While it is true that judges aren't bound by such recommendations, and Judge Wood stated specifically that she was not, it is customary for judges to carry out the wishes of prosecutors in this regard. So Milken and his entourage were confident that the maximum sentence Milken would receive was five years.

When Judge Wood began to speak, in her usual calm manner, it soon became obvious that she had rejected the core of the Milken position, which was that he was a misunderstood genius, whose contributions to business far outweighed any technical crimes he had committed. Judge Wood told Milken, "When a man of your power in the financial world, at the head of the most important department of one of the most important investment banking houses in this country, repeatedly conspires to violate, and violates, securities and tax laws in order to achieve more power and wealth for himself and his wealthy clients, and commits financial crimes that are particularly hard to detect, a significant prison term is required in order to deter others. This kind of misuse of your leadership position and enlisting employees whom you supervised to assist you in violating the laws are serious crimes warranting serious punishment and the discomfort and opprobrium of being removed from society."

As suspense mounted, Judge Wood asked Milken to rise. Liman supported him by the elbow. "You are unquestionably a man of talent and industry and you have consistently shown a dedication to those less fortunate than you," she went on. "It is my hope that the rest of your life will fulfill the promise shown early in your career. . . . However, for the reasons stated earlier, I sentence you to a total of ten years in prison, consisting of two years each on counts two through six to be served consecutively. . . . You may be seated at this point." Judge Wood herself then rose to leave the courtroom.

GETTING READY FOR THE NIGHT

When Grandma combed her fine white hair at night
until it toppled to her shoulder blades
in startling cascades, bright-angel-winged,
she looked like Milton's seraph at the gate
of Paradise: sovereign, ingenuous, and stern.
I marvelled in the ripples of her hair
the teasing and impertinent lamplight touched,
but "Won't you clip my toenails for me now?"
she said, and then, with a stoic sigh,
"It's hard to be so old, so incapable."
I didn't want to touch her pallid foot
and yet it felt astonishing when her left
foot nestled in my clasp and I began
scissoring the wrinkled horn of nail
with snipping shears until the pale
translucencies of toenail ribboned off.
Her sole felt warm in my deft paw
and suddenly I could appreciate
Grandma being mortal, one who sheds
skin and nails and all integuments . . .

But then she twined
and spooled her colorless flat hair
about accustomed fingers into supple
braids
and I was baffled in the tenderness
her silk-shaded light winked down on both of us.

I snipped her toenails
evenly. Together we prepared her
for the night. Together we made sure
that, shorn and braided, she would enter into
the encirclements of darkness just beyond
the pooled, penurious empire
of the lamp.

—ERIC ORMSBY

Clearly, the purpose of the ten-year sentence was to send a message to Wall Street and to the securities industry throughout the country. Equally clearly, Judge Wood had considered precisely how to deliver the message, and, after deliberation, had decided to say nothing about parole guidelines, which meant that Milken's actual time in prison would be not ten years but something short of forty months. It could be assumed that Milken's lawyers would explain to him that ten years didn't really mean ten years.

But Milken's lawyers were stunned. Liman was incredulous. Milken himself was so dazed that he didn't grasp that he'd been sentenced to consecutive, not concurrent, sentences, and had to be told outside the courtroom. He and his wife then rushed into an adjoining room and closed the door. After hearing their cries, Sandler burst in, whereupon he found Milken short of breath and on the verge of collapse. In the confusion, no one had time to reflect on the nuances of the parole guidelines. Press coverage focussed heavily on the ten-year sentence, and, as Judge Wood must have intended, shock waves swept through Wall Street. It was only three weeks later, after a further hearing, that Judge Wood made explicit her expectation that, given the parole guidelines, Milken would serve between thirty-six and forty months. By then, press interest had faded. A fundamental misconception had already been embedded in the minds of the public: that Milken would be serving ten years in prison.

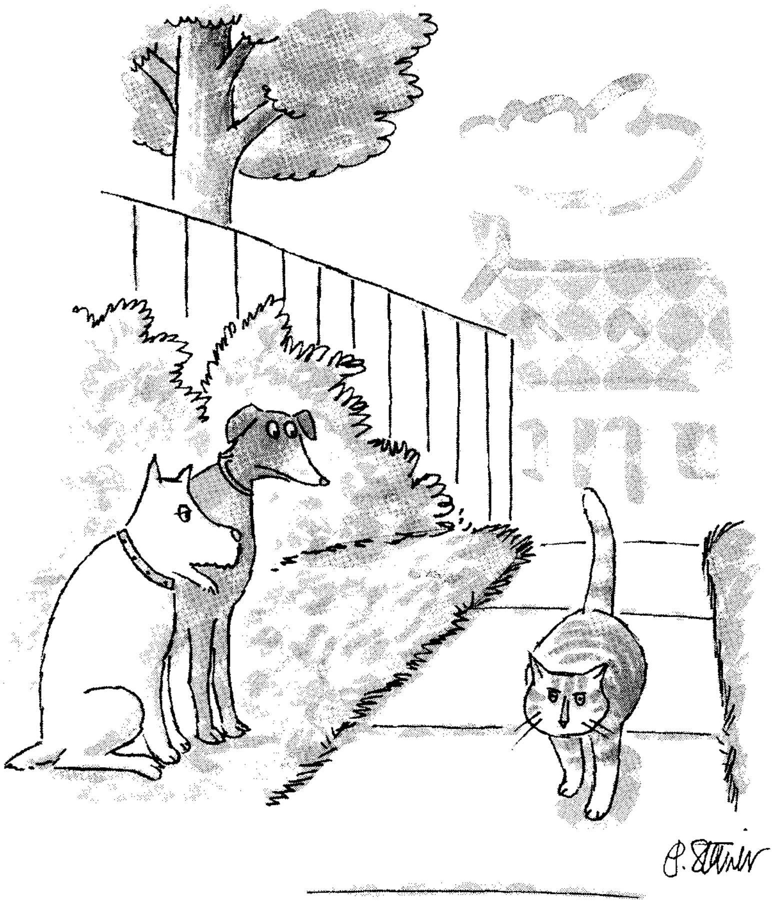
AFTER sentencing, Milken began the long-awaited "coöperation" phase of his plea agreement. Earlier, Milken's lawyers had said Milken could provide information about four "situations," but they had never made a proffer, an explicit written indication that might implicate others, and had certainly never made promises on the scale of Ivan Boesky, who had provided the prosecutors with reams of information about Milken himself and many others. The most that Liman had said to John Carroll, an Assistant United States Attorney who had been in the front line of the Milken case since its inception, in 1986, was "There are a number of things he can help you with." Still, given Milken's position at the epicenter of finance during the eighties, with a list of clients that ranged from corporate raiders like Carl Icahn, Saul Steinberg, and Carl Lindner to the most notorious heads of S. & L.s and insurance companies, like Charles Keating, Thomas Spiegel, and Fred Carr, expectations among government lawyers were keen, especially at the S.E.C. Judge Wood had every reason to believe that if Milken was completely candid his coöperation would yield extraordinary results.

Milken himself was described as so eager to meet with his prosecutors that he asked for sessions, and was granted them, even before he reported to the federal prison to which he was assigned—the minimum-security facility at Pleasanton, California, near San Francisco. So the disappointment was palpable when it turned out that what Milken really wanted to talk about was the workings of the nation's financial markets—a topic he felt that government lawyers didn't understand. To their astonishment, Milken reiterated the position he'd taken before his guilty plea: that he himself had participated in no other wrongdoing, and thus couldn't directly implicate anyone else in crime.

This came as no surprise to Milken's lawyers, of course. Liman had shrewdly recognized that to allow Milken to "coöperate" before his sentencing would be to invite disaster, given the political atmosphere surrounding the case and what it was that Milken was likely to say. From the outset, Milken had denied that he'd done anything wrong. After his guilty plea, that changed only enough to accommodate the fact that he had admitted six felonies. Now his position was that he had done nothing else wrong, notwithstanding that the government had brought a ninety-eight-count indictment. The judge's ruling that the government had failed to prove all but one of the additional counts at the Fatico hearing had only strengthened Milken in his denial. It had been extremely difficult psychologically for Milken to admit the six felonies. The notion that he might now admit more, even if it meant a sentence reduction, was anathema to him. Liman explains, "If you've had a client plead guilty, you have to find a way that he can emerge with his self-respect. He wasn't going to go in there and make up a story to please the prosecutors, even if he got a better sentence. There wasn't going to be any Soviet-style show confession."

This approach, of course, begs the question of whether Milken had in fact engaged in other wrongdoing. There would be no "show confession" if what Milken chose to confess was true. But the practical impact was the same whether Milken was innocent or guilty of further wrongdoing: he had little to say of any value to law enforcement. Liman had recognized that if Milken started his coöperation before sentencing there were two possible outcomes: prosecutors would be so angry that they would revoke the plea agreement, or they would denounce Milken at his sentencing hearing as non-coöperative. So Liman insisted on, and got, several extraordinary provisions in Milken's plea agreement. Coöperation would begin only when it was too late to have any impact on Milken's initial sentence—when what he said could help reduce his sentence but could not increase it. Significantly, the Milken plea bargain included no provision to permit prosecutors to revoke the agreement if they believed Milken had lied. Typically, plea bargains that have entailed coöperation, including Ivan Boesky's, have been revocable for lying. Thus, the plea agreement itself was all but a license for Milken to stonewall.

The timing of Milken's plea also proved a serious blow to the government lawyers. Securities fraud is a crime with a five-year statute of limitations. It was in March of 1990 that Milken agreed to plead guilty, but his coöperation didn't begin until December, 1990. That was almost precisely five years after the end of his dealings with Boesky. Consequently, much of what Boesky had alleged, including criminal schemes that cast suspicion on such figures as Saul Steinberg and Fred Carr (both of whom have denied any wrongdoing in connection with Milken), was too old to be pros-



"*Are we talking about life style or orientation?*"

ecuted, even if Milken had something incriminating to say about it.

The lawyers from the United States Attorney's office, led by Carroll, seemed almost resigned. "Our expectations were very diminished," Carroll says. "I never expected him to be the Rosetta stone of fraud. Liman said, clearly, he would not be another Boesky. But a lot of people crack in jail. We hoped for that."

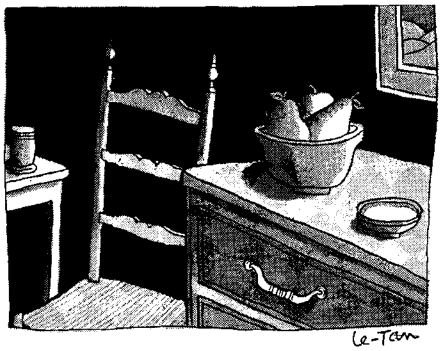
The S.E.C. lawyers were more frustrated. "Basically, I didn't believe a thing exculpatory he said from the first day," says one who participated in many of the debriefings. "Basically, if people had put the finger on him he was happy to try to put the finger on them. Everything else he stonewalled." Another says, "The guy was a master salesman. He was very, very bright. As with so many market cases, anyone can come up with three dozen explanations or rationalizations. They pass the laugh test. A good salesman can argue either side. He was very good at this. No matter what you confronted him with, he had some explanation. It might make sense; it might not. He didn't care about consistency."

Government lawyers ultimately had more than thirty sessions with Milken. A lawyer who attended nearly all of them says, "The format was this: He requested some sessions. Others we scheduled. They'd ask to set the agenda. There were things he wanted to say. He had comments on a number of things he thought were industry practices, a fair number of occasions where he thought he'd identified trading patterns involving former customers and competitors that might suggest violations, such as securities-parking arrangements. On none of these did he have any direct knowledge. There were sessions where he would simply give his impressions of where he thought there could be abuses in an industry. He'd offer opinions. Major money-center banks, for example—what they might be doing. Insurance companies. But he had no direct knowledge."

Concerning the long list of notorious clients which had so piqued the interest of the government lawyers, Milken had virtually nothing to say. "I don't want to sound too conspiratorial," one of the S.E.C. lawyers says, "but if Milken turned against the people he did business with, the time would come when they would have to cut their own deals. What they'd tell on him, in the court of public opinion, might have cooked him. By keeping silent, he guaranteed that very little dirty laundry would come out about him."

Perhaps the high point of Milken's coöperation came in discussions of the Guarantee Security Life Insurance Company, a Milken client that is based in Jacksonville, Florida. Guarantee is one of the many Milken clients that have collapsed into insolvency in recent years, and it has left fifty-seven thousand mostly low- and middle-income annuity holders unable to cash in their policies.

Though Mark Sanford, the chairman of Guarantee, is never mentioned by those who extoll Milken's ability to finance entrepreneurs, he was the kind of flamboyant client who had trouble getting financing from traditional sources but found a receptive audience in Milken. Sanford owned an island in the Bahamas, and he established his own currency there: silver coins that bore a likeness of him, with a parrot on his shoulder, on one side and a likeness of his wife, in a string bikini, on the other. During the heyday of the eighties, he praised the virtues of junk bonds to anyone who would listen, and lavished praise on Milken. Thomas Tew, special counsel to the Florida Department of Insurance, which is investigating Guarantee and has filed a claim against Milken, says that Guarantee was intended to become "the East Coast version of Executive Life"—a reference to a California insurer, run by Fred Carr, that bought billions of dollars of Milken's junk-bond offerings before it, too, collapsed into insolvency, defaulting on three hundred and seventy thousand policies. According to Tew, "Sanford loaded up on junk" generated by Milken, and he says that Milken and Drexel also financed junk offerings by Guarantee's parent company, Transmart. Some of this money apparently financed, among other curiosities, a chain of nude bars.

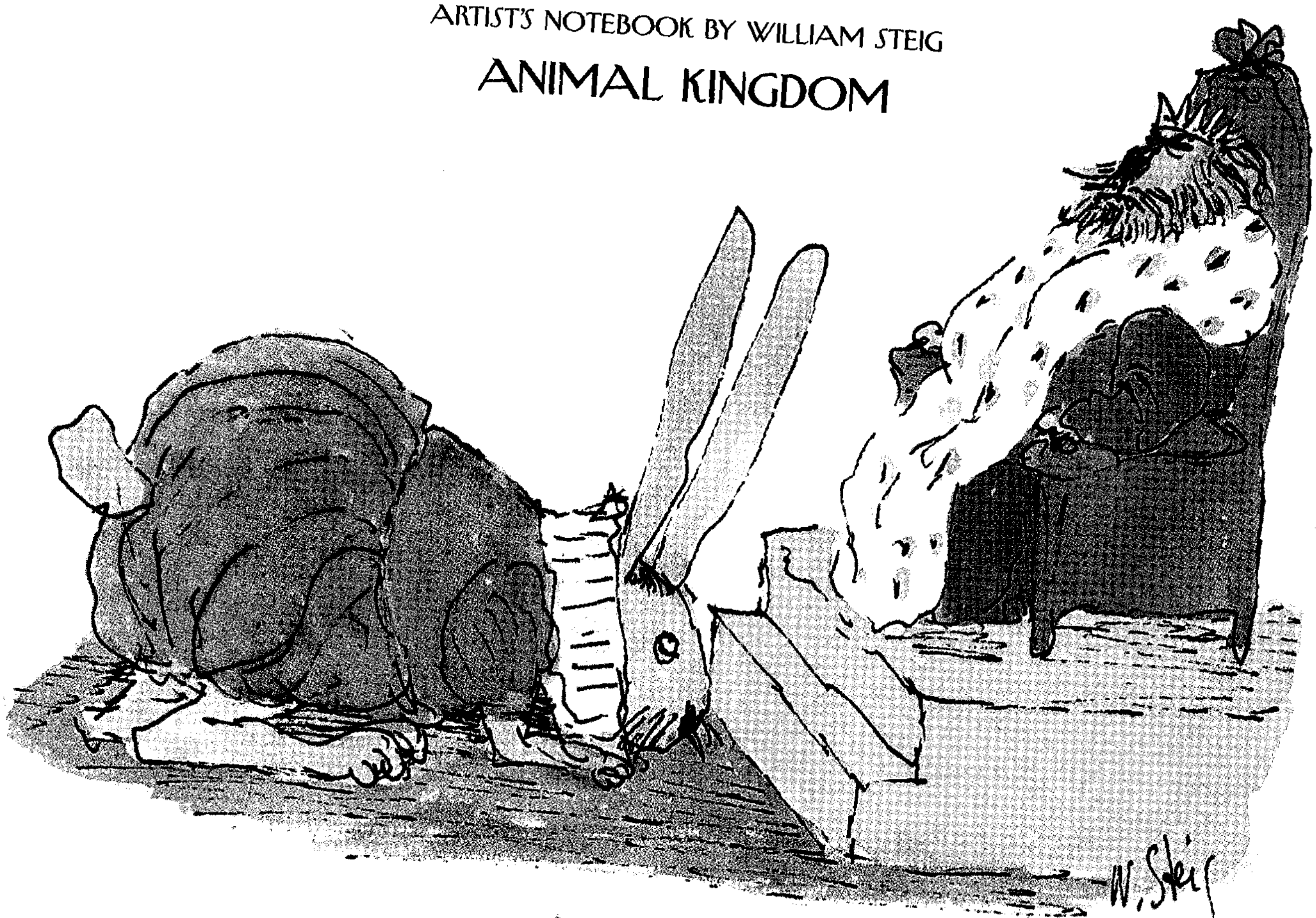


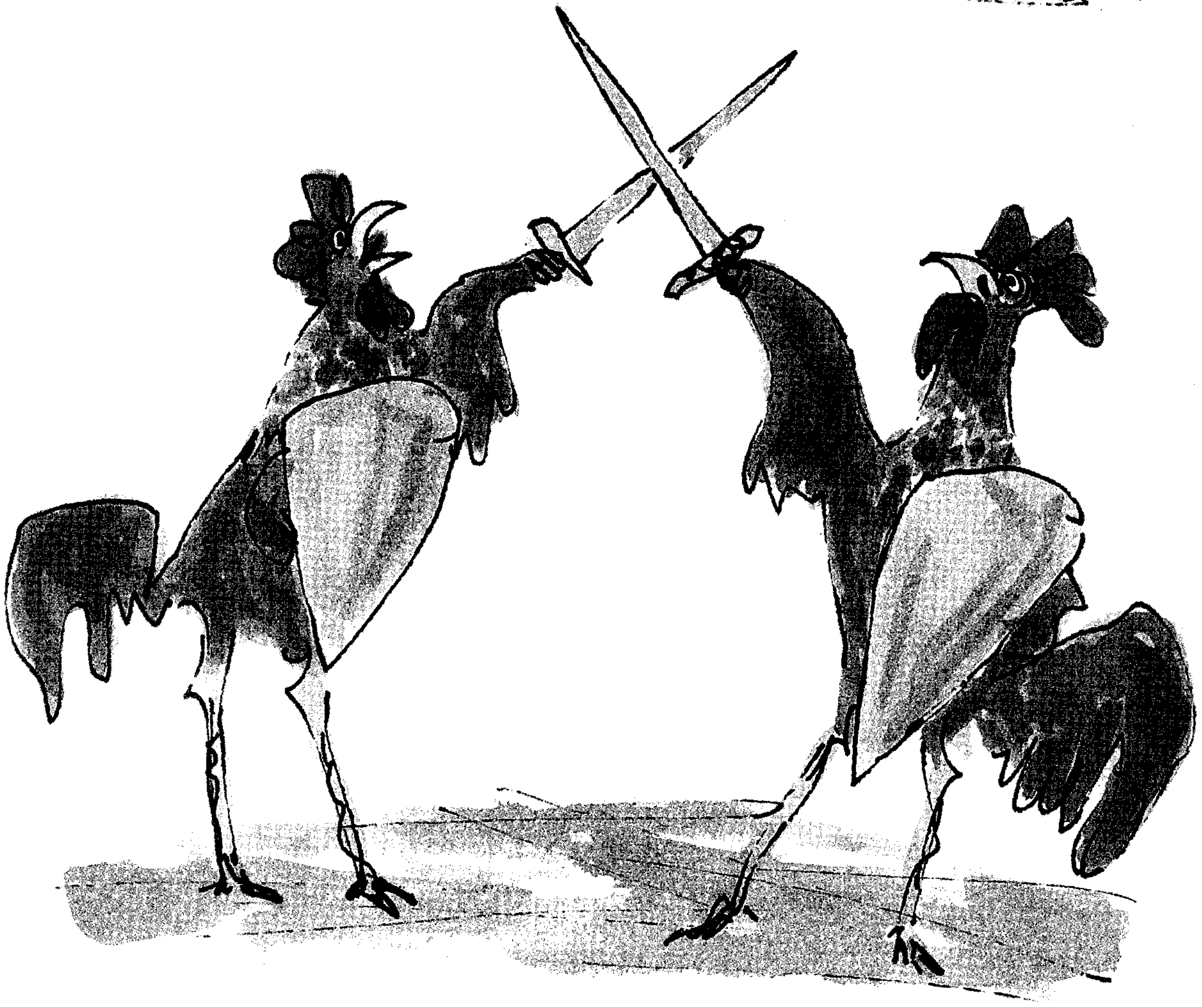
In any event, Florida regulators now maintain that, because relatively risky investments such as junk bonds are required by law to be backed by a higher level of assets, Guarantee was actually insolvent by 1985. To disguise its true financial condition, they say, Guarantee "parked" its junk bonds with others, while fraudulently substituting United States Treasury bonds, which, of course, don't require the higher level of assets. In so-called parking schemes, securities aren't carried on the books of the true owner but are temporarily sold to someone else with the understanding that the seller will continue to bear any risk of loss and reap any profits.

At a meeting called by Milken with lawyers from the United States Attorney's office on December 17, 1990, and again with S.E.C. lawyers the following month, Milken recalled that a representative of Guarantee had sought a parking arrangement with Drexel; he had rebuffed him, Milken said. But Merrill Lynch & Company, he said, had agreed to take the positions.

Merrill Lynch is currently under investigation as a result of the disclosures, and, according to government sources, evidence has mounted that the trades were shams, intended to disguise Guarantee's true financial condition. (A spokesman for Merrill Lynch says, "These charges are totally outrageous. We strongly deny that we engaged in any illegal or unethical activity connected to Guarantee Life. During the course of business, we did securities trades for the company, but as to alleged parking, we've carefully examined these trades and concluded that no such parking occurred, because Merrill Lynch assumed all risk. We obtained assurances in writing from Guarantee that these trades would be fully and fairly presented to relevant regulatory authorities and these were fully disclosed.") In reviewing the Guarantee trading records, the government lawyers also discovered similar large trades with none other than Milken's own department at Drexel. S.E.C. lawyers indicated that they had additional corroborating evidence, including testimony by one of Milken's aides, that the Drexel transactions, though they were more cleverly disguised than Merrill Lynch's, ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK BY WILLIAM STEIG

ANIMAL KINGDOM





were in fact parking arrangements.

According to Milken's lawyer Richard Sandler, in a 1992 letter to Judge Wood, an S.E.C. lawyer named James Coffman confronted Sandler with his suspicions, saying the S.E.C. had "circumstantial evidence" that there was an improper agreement, and that if Milken's recollection were "refreshed," it would have a significant impact on any sentencing recommendation the S.E.C. might provide Judge Wood. (Coffman says that he always made it clear that he only wanted Milken to be truthful.) Milken, for his part, declared that the trades were perfectly legal, because Drexel bore the risk and actually owned the positions. This, of course, was consistent with Milken's denial of wrongdoing, and, in Sandler's and Liman's eyes, an illustration of Milken's courage in resisting S.E.C. pressure. To the S.E.C. lawyers, it was a particularly infuriating instance of Milken's stonewalling.

Milken's reaction was similar when S.E.C. lawyers brought up another instance of parking. Milken said that Reliance Group Holdings, the Saul Steinberg-run insurer, had wanted to park securities with Drexel, but Milken had rebuffed the request. Although the S.E.C. had launched a full-scale investigation of Reliance's trading practices and had obtained corroborating evidence that Drexel had parked securities, Milken maintained that the trades were lawful. In still another situation, involving Columbia Savings & Loan, which was identified for the government by a coöperating Milken aide who had handled the trading, Milken denied knowledge of the trades and of any wrongdoing. The United States Attorney investigated the matter, but declined to bring charges against Columbia's former chief executive, Thomas Spiegel, a close Milken friend. (Spiegel has been indicted in California on other matters.) Thus, in what proved a consistent pattern, Milken was willing to impute wrongdoing to a competitor, such as Merrill Lynch, but he steadfastly denied any wrongdoing involving himself or his former clients.

Milken's ire, government lawyers concluded, was aimed not only at competitors but also at those former colleagues of his who, in his view, had turned against him. Foremost among them was Fred Joseph, Drexel's former chief executive, for, in the eyes of many in the Milken camp, Joseph's decision to have Drexel plead guilty in 1989 had been the beginning of the end for Milken. Though Joseph had long denied that he knew anything of Milken's illegal activities, Milken in his government briefings now maintained that he had told Joseph about his illegal trading involving the Finsbury Fund, a mutual fund that was a heavy investor in Milken junk bonds. One of the counts to which Milken pleaded guilty involved manipulating junk-bond prices of Finsbury trades so that Milken could recoup commissions his department had had to pay Drexel salesmen who brought investors into the fund; the matter had always been of concern to the government, because it was an illustration of how Milken's illegal activity had cheated mutual-fund investors. Milken also claimed that Joseph and another Drexel official knew of a series of trades by Milken partnerships that violated securities laws prohibiting "hot issue" trading—buying and then quickly selling a new issue

Though Joseph continues to deny any detailed knowledge of Milken's activities in these matters, it is expected that, largely to get the Milken ordeal behind him, he will soon settle S.E.C. charges that he failed to supervise Milken adequately. Milken himself was able to implicate Joseph with minimal damage to his own reputation: he had already admitted the Finsbury matter, and, as for the hot-issue trading, he can still contend that the trades were approved by his supervisors and that he himself didn't realize there was anything wrong with them.

With minor exceptions, this was the sum and substance of Milken's coöperation: two stock-parking investigations, which so far haven't resulted in criminal charges; two investigations of former Drexel executives, likely to end in civil

"I told you you never should have had that sensitivity training."

WESTPORT GRUNGE
HAT $1.00
PLAID FLANNEL SHIRT $3.00
SHIRT $2.50
HOODED SWEATSHIRT $4.00
PANTS $6.50
TENNIS SHOES $2.50
RANGE ROVER → $40,000
YARD SALE

S.E.C. settlements and minimal sanctions; and largely worthless leads about witnesses against him. An S.E.C. enforcement official offers this summation: "The bottom line is he's given us information leading to several leads and inquiries, but he has not been candid. He has not been helpful, even about those events where we have some evidence that he does have knowledge. He's helpful only about competitors or people who ratted on him. As far as we're concerned, he has not lived up to his agreement with the government."

Milken's lawyers, of course, take a different view, and even some government lawyers seem more resigned than angry. "The premise," one says, "is that he knows more than he gave the government. He'll deny that to his dying day."

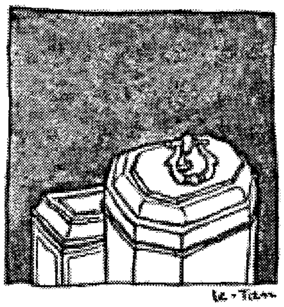
On March 3, 1991, Milken reported to the federal prison at Pleasanton. He was assigned work as an orderly—the lowest category of labor for incoming prisoners—and was made to empty wastebaskets, mop floors, and clean toilets. Although his treatment fell within the discretion accorded prison officials, Judge Wood was known to be concerned that Milken's notoriety might mean he would be treated more harshly than other prisoners. Milken tackled prison life with the zeal he had previously bestowed on the junk-bond market. As early as five-thirty in the morning, before his prison duties began, and after they were finished in the evening, he tutored inmates seeking a high-school-equivalency degree. He developed and taught them math games; he brought in Scrabble sets and organized a Scrabble tournament. On family visiting day, he set up a booth where inmates could play math games with their children. His efforts were so successful that he was released from his latrine duties and elevated to the position of teacher's aide. But the assignment was relatively short-lived, because, his lawyers say, the Bureau of Prisons was afraid it would be criticized for coddling Milken. Instead, he was transferred to the landscaping crew, where he pulled weeds and mowed grass, and then moved to construction, where he specialized in Sheetrock and drywall work. (Several of the former military barracks on the property were being renovated to accommodate additional inmates.) Though Milken, of course, had no experience in the construction trades, he was proud of the fact that his work earned him the highest marks from his supervisors on a "report card" that was eventually submitted to Judge Wood. Milken also worked hard to earn the good will of his fellow-inmates. Many of them were in the minimum-security facility for drug-related offenses, and Milken joined the prison's chapter of Narcotics Anonymous. This was not, his lawyers emphasize, because Milken had a drug or alcohol problem himself but because he wanted to better understand the inmates who did.

Milken was allowed to participate in the liquidation of some of his investments and he spent hours with lawyers, both his own and the government's. His Gulfstream IV jet was used to ferry visitors from Southern California. Technically, he wasn't allowed to directly manage his immense fortune. He could make outgoing calls only, from a single pay phone, and he didn't want other inmates complaining that he was monopolizing it. He also assumed the phone was tapped. He was cut off from the computer screens of his trading desk and limited to a few periodicals and only one daily paper; he had to borrow someone else's *Wall Street Journal.*

Milken also complained about the food to his family and friends (though not to prison officials). The facility was comparatively new and had no working kitchen when Milken arrived, so inmates either ate cold meals or walked a long distance to other facilities. Several months later, after the kitchen opened, Milken's mother, Ferne, in one of several letters to Judge Wood extolling her son's virtues, complained about the high-fat, starchy diet he was being served. Prison officials finally ordered Milken himself onto the kitchen detail.

Milken didn't like prison, of course, but he was a long way from cracking under the experience, as prosecutors had hoped. In October, 1991, after it became clear that any breakthroughs in coöperation were unlikely, Milken's lawyers filed a motion to reduce his sentence, arguing, "During the past 11 months, Mr. Milken has coöperated extensively with government authorities, particularly concerning industry trade practices. Mr. Milken has provided government investigators with information about potentially unlawful trade practices by investment firms in the securities industry."

The argument on coöperation was feeble—"industry practices" are a long way from solid criminal cases—and the prosecutors took sharp issue with the notion that his sentence should be reduced. "While Mr. Milken has devoted substantial time and energy to the process and certain of his disclosures have resulted in the commencement of criminal and civil investigations . . . his coöperation hasn't resulted in any indictments or convictions," they noted. And after a hundred and fifty hours of interviewing him they said they didn't believe Milken had "completely disclosed all the wrongdoing of which he is aware."



Judge Wood took this information in stride. Had Milken provided new disclosures, she might well have assumed that he would serve less than a year, once the value of his assistance became clear. On the other hand, the defense's insistence at the outset that the coöperation agreement precede the coöperation itself had raised doubts about Milken's sincerity. Still, the prosecutors held out the hope that Milken might provide more, so she deferred ruling on the motion, in effect leaving Milken's ten-year (forty-month) sentence intact.

In March, 1992, Milken agreed to pay an additional five hundred million dollars to settle civil lawsuits, including a suit by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation charging that his actions had cost taxpayers unspecified billions of dollars in losses in the S. & L. scandal. Judge Milton Pollack, a colleague of Judge Wood's in the Southern District who presided over the civil cases, was delighted by the outcome and Milken's role in reaching a settlement, and brought it to Judge Wood's attention. But David Boies, a Cravath, Swaine & Moore partner who represented the government and played a key role in extracting the settlement, says he saw scant indication of any willingness by Milken to admit the full scope of his wrongdoing. "There was a tremendous amount more he could have offered from what we knew," Boies says. "It was clear from what we had that Milken had lots of information."

Judge Wood's decision to defer and the civil settlement were modest victories for prosecutors, but they were not enough to overcome the torpor that had set in over the Milken case. John Carroll, who had now been promoted to the post of chief of the securities-fraud unit, had suffered the strain and bad publicity of the Fatico hearings and the fruitless extensive questioning of Milken. After all the years of butting heads with the vastly stronger forces of Paul, Weiss, of Williams & Connolly, and of other firms deployed by Milken, and after all the public-relations attacks—financed for a period to the tune of three million dollars a month, according to a Drexel affidavit—Carroll was tired.

Nonetheless, Carroll felt that at least one other case had to be brought to trial: that of Alan Rosenthal, a key Milken aide who had consistently stonewalled the government, refusing to implicate Milken even though multiple witnesses placed Milken at the center of the scheme involving the Finsbury trades. Rosenthal, a former retail clothing salesman from Cherry Hill, New Jersey, had been a neighbor of Milken's there when Milken was beginning his career on Wall Street. Milken tapped Rosenthal to join him, and soon the two were catching the six-fifteen bus to Manhattan every morning. Rosenthal followed Milken to Beverly Hills, and Milken made him rich beyond his wildest dreams. No one pretended, however, that Rosenthal had evolved into any kind of financial genius. In appearance and demeanor, he still seemed more the clothing salesman, albeit one transplanted to Beverly Hills. His chief virtue was, and always had been, intense loyalty to Milken.

For this, the prosecutors felt that an example had to be made of Rosenthal. Other Milken loyalists, such as James Dahl, who was once his top salesman, and Terren Peizer, who had had the honored seat next to Milken at the trading desk, had coöperated, at considerable risk to their reputations and their future in the business. They had been branded as rats, and both had been internally ostracized at Drexel. The rest of Wall Street had to see, the prosecutors felt, that the penalties for stonewalling were more severe than those for coöperating. The United States Attorney's office had to establish what the prosecutors called a "reward structure" for those who coöperated.

And, of course, the Rosenthal case could be used to make another example—of Milken himself. If Milken appeared as a witness, it would be a public display that he was in fact coöperating with the government. (One government lawyer says that Milken "was more important as an exhibit than as a witness.") Forcing him to testify against one of his closest friends might also increase the pressure on him enough to elicit still more coöperation from him.

At the same time, Carroll recognized that the Rosenthal case was not overwhelming. As the prosecutors sometimes put it among themselves, Rosenthal's relatively insignificant role within the Milken empire made him "the flea on the back of the elephant." His wrongdoing was much less serious than Milken's, so there was a real danger that any jury would sympathize with him for simply carrying out Milken's orders. Rosenthal's name meant nothing to the public; there was no public clamor for his indictment. Moreover, the case was one that the government couldn't afford to lose. Not only would a loss undermine the reward structure they were trying to establish but it would be a public-relations disaster. Carroll had seen what the Milken public-relations forces had made out of the Fatico hearing, and that wasn't even a full-blown trial.

As the prosecutors explored the dimensions of a Rosenthal trial, it soon became clear to them that Milken would be a less than stellar witness. True, Milken acknowledged a fact crucial to the case: that he had designated Rosenthal to keep track of the illegal trades aimed at recouping the Finsbury commissions Milken felt he was owed. But he maintained that he didn't believe that Rosenthal was doing anything wrong, and that Rosenthal didn't know there was anything illegal about the arrangement, even though it was one of the felonies that Milken himself had admitted. It was obvious that Milken felt near-desperation at the very thought of being asked to testify against his loyal friend.

The standoff set the stage for a crucial series of negotiations between Milken's lawyers and the government. Liman shrewdly sensed that, as eager as Milken was to avoid testifying, the government was even more eager to enlist him as a coöperative witness in a case that it felt it had to win. About three weeks before the trial was scheduled to begin, and before it had been determined whether Milken would be called to testify, Liman spoke with Nelson Cunningham, the young Assistant United States Attorney who had replaced Carroll as the head of the Milken prosecution. Cunningham, who would be trying the Rosenthal case, had begun work on the Milken case only after Milken's sentencing the year before, and thus hadn't lived through the long, contentious negotiations leading to Milken's guilty plea. He was the first of the Milken prosecutors to view him primarily as a potential government witness, an ally, rather than as a government target.

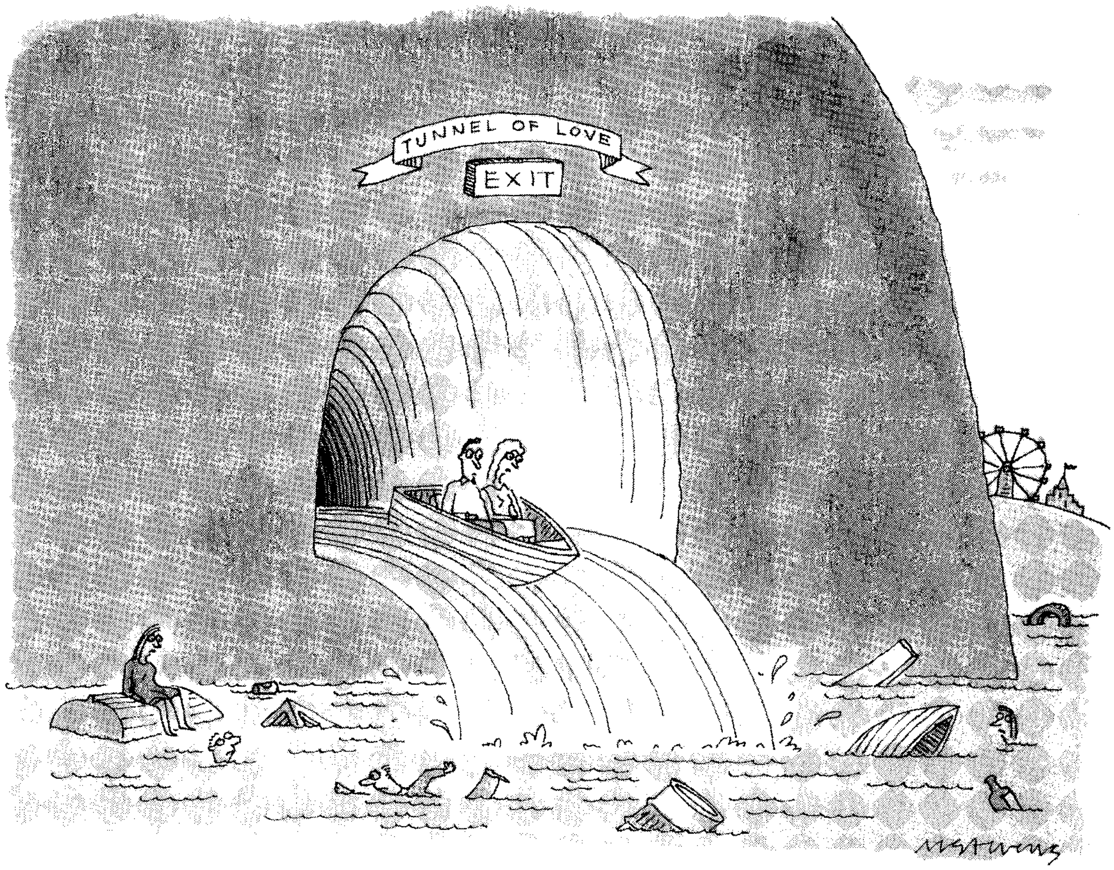
Liman transformed the negotiations into a test not of Milken's integrity but of Cunningham's. He argued that, after all that Milken had suffered at the hands of prosecutors, there was no reason that Milken should trust Cunningham to treat him fairly. Given the hostile political climate, he doubted that Cunningham would reward Milken for testifying even if he deserved it.

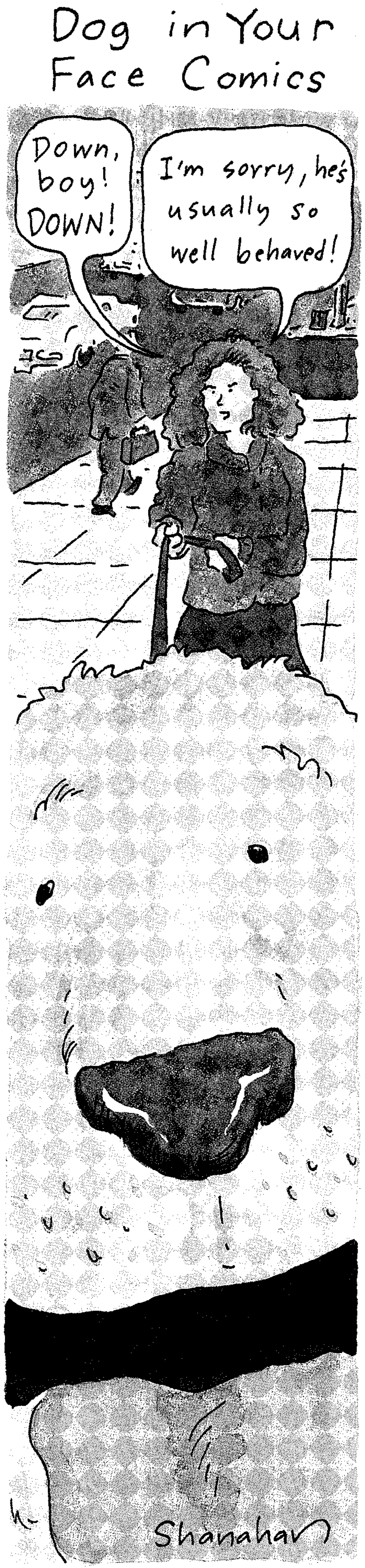
Cunningham rose to the challenge. He said he could understand Milken's mistrust, but insisted he didn't care about public opinion. Then he made a crucial promise: if Milken's testimony was consistent with what he'd already told prosecutors, Cunningham would write a letter to Judge Wood describing Milken's coöperation. "I won't be afraid to give him a good report card," he added, and said he'd have the "courage" to give Milken a favorable report. Liman seized upon this offer. Implicit in it, at least to Liman's mind, was the understanding that the letter characterizing Milken's testimony would contain the phrase "substantial assistance." It is a measure of Liman's confidence in his deal with Cunningham that he called co-counsel Richard Sandler and told him that if Milken testified he would definitely be credited with "substantial assistance." In sentencing reductions, the phrase is a term of art; it all but guarantees a significant reduction in a prison term.

After a flurry of phone calls among the Milken defense lawyers, a deal was struck: Milken would appear for the government in the Rosenthal case in return for having his coöperation favorably described by the government. In reality, the government had now lost what leverage it still had on Milken, for, with that promise in his hand, it mattered little what else Milken did or said beyond his Rosenthal testimony. Judge Wood would have to evaluate coöperation to which the government itself had given its imprimatur.

MILKEN took the witness stand in the Rosenthal case on June 1, 1992—his first public appearance since he entered prison. He wore a conservative dark suit but not his toupee, and, with slightly graying temples, he looked much older than he had during his heyday at the Drexel trading desk. He seemed relaxed, however, at the prospect of testifying against an old friend.

The proceeding quickly turned into what seemed to be a star turn for Milken and a disaster for the prosecutors, who had given up so much to get him there. Milken seized the opportunity to extoll once again the virtues of junk bonds and make the case that they had benefitted the economy. Far from being the work of a manipulative mastermind, as the government had once portrayed his activities, Milken said, junk bonds had been a "mediating force" that "reduced the volatility of the marketplace." And, much to the dismay of Carroll and the other prosecutors, he tried to minimize his own guilt, arguing that his crimes stemmed from




Dog in Your Face Comics
Down, boy! DOWN!
I'm sorry, he's usually so well behaved!
Shanahan

"lack of thought, not thinking," because "I was probably too busy at the time."

At one point, Cunningham approached the bench and, in an extraordinary colloquy, revealed that he was going to ask Milken questions that he expected would result in perjury. Ordinarily, prosecutors will never call as a witness someone who could be expected to commit perjury, since any perjury obviously undermines the credibility of the witness on all other matters. Nonetheless, Cunningham went ahead: he asked if Milken had ordered the destruction of evidence related to the Finsbury scheme. Milken, under oath, testified that he had not.

Later in the case, the former Milken aide Terren Peizer took the stand and testified that Milken had ordered him to give Lorraine Spurge, another Milken loyalist, all the notebooks he had that contained records of the Finsbury transactions, and to make sure that Rosenthal did the same with any similar notebooks he had. Peizer said he handed over his notebooks to Spurge in the kitchenette off the trading floor, with the water running, in case the room was bugged. None of the notebooks were ever seen again. Cunningham was forced to undermine Milken, his own witness, by stating that his denial of the document destruction was "simply inconsistent with the evidence that has been presented at this trial and with other evidence within our knowledge." Indeed, Judge Wood had ruled against Milken on that very issue after the Fatico hearing, concluding that Milken had obstructed justice.

Milken grudgingly testified that Rosenthal had kept the records on the Finsbury dealings. But an S.E.C. enforcement lawyer who observed the trial was dismayed. "The testimony provided a lot of insight into how Milken approached his coöperation. He was evasive, testy, he minimized his own involvement. He adopted euphemisms and characterizations to minimize his own wrongdoing," he recalls.

Yet as soon as Milken's cross-examination was over—before a verdict had even been rendered—Liman called on Cunningham to honor their pre-trial agreement. Cunningham conceded that Milken had testified as he expected. He said he would write the letter to Judge Wood and volunteered that he would describe Milken's assistance as "substantial." Thus a phrase usually reserved for coöperation on the scale of a Boesky or a Mafia chieftain who risks his life in implicating others was bestowed on Milken.

Under the circumstances, it's remarkable that the government emerged from the trial with even a semblance of success. The jury convicted Rosenthal on one of the five counts—aiding and abetting an attempt to bribe a client. Though that was the least serious of the offenses with which he was charged, it did allow the government to claim a conviction. But the jury acquitted Rosenthal on the four other counts. Ultimately, Rosenthal was given a minimal sentence—community service and a fine.

Milken was even more in his element during another case—the only other case in which he testified: the trial of Patricia Ostrander, a Fidelity-mutual-fund manager charged with accepting a bribe from Milken in order to get Fidelity to invest in Milken-generated junk bonds. The case held particular significance for the government, because it provided another instance of how Milken had corrupted the mutual-fund business.

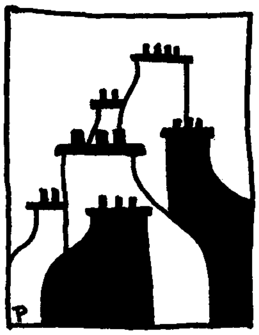
This time, the government wasn't so foolish as to call Milken as a witness. Instead, he appeared on Ostrander's behalf. Indeed, Milken's reputation as a non-coöperating "coöperating" witness was now so widespread within the securities defense bar that Ostrander's lawyer, Harry Manion, called him as a witness without interviewing him first. "I wasn't the least bit worried," he says. "Patsy was absolutely confident that he wouldn't say anything to hurt her." And he didn't. Taking the stand on July 20th and 21st, Milken steadfastly denied offering any bribe to Ostrander. But, in a development of interest to the prosecutors, he did acknowledge that he had personally determined who would get lucrative warrants—inexpensive rights to buy stock—in connection with the 1985 Milken-financed buyout of Storer Communications by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts. It was these warrants that were illegally given to Ostrander in return for Fidelity's buying into the deal. This had been one of the matters presented at the Fatico hearing, in which Judge Wood had ruled in Milken's favor for the very reason that the government failed to prove that it was Milken who determined who got the warrants. Now Milken was admitting it.

Ironically, Milken proved more valuable to the government as a defense witness than as a witness for the prosecution. The jury convicted Ostrander on two counts of accepting an illegal gratuity and one count of failing to disclose her investment in the Storer warrants. Milken's lawyers claim that Milken hadn't known that Ostrander was keeping the warrants for herself rather than for the mutual fund and thus didn't intend them as a bribe.

By the end of July, when the Ostrander trial ended, Milken's attempts to reach a resolution of his motion to reduce his sentence were well under way. The crucial element was what the prosecutors would now say to Judge Wood about Milken's coöperation, and Liman and his colleagues were determined to hold the United States Attorney's office to Cunningham's promise. They needn't have worried. Cunningham's first draft contained the words "substantial assistance." But when the letter was submitted to Roger Hayes, the deputy who functioned as United States Attorney on the Milken matter, he was dismayed by its favorable tone toward Milken. Hayes was put in the position of arguing with his own prosecutors that it should be harsher. Ultimately, the letter was modified: Two instances of alleged perjury by Milken (his denial of involvement in the disappearance of documents and an assertion that his brother Lowell was never involved in the Finsbury matter) were elevated from footnotes and incorporated into the text of the letter. But the phrase "substantially assisted" was prominent.

When a copy of the letter reached the S.E.C., William R. McLucas, the director of the enforcement division, and his colleagues were deeply disappointed. They knew nothing of the secret protocol that had led to Milken's appearance in the Rosenthal case, and they were surprised by the characterization of Milken's assistance. "My guess is that they were worn out," one of the S.E.C. enforcement lawyers says of the prosecutors. "They used the magic words 'substantial assistance.' Didn't they realize the impact? Those are the magic words. Even I knew that, and I'm not a criminal lawyer. I have great respect for John Carroll. But we were concerned that the 'Stockholm syndrome' had taken hold—that is, if someone takes you hostage, you become sympathetic to the person who captured you."

The S.E.C. was in no position to comment on Milken's role in any criminal cases, including his testimony in the Rosenthal case, but it could, and did, address his help in S.E.C. investigations in a letter submitted to Judge Wood. "While Milken has identified patterns of trading between former customers and former competitors which suggest that violations of the federal securities laws may have occurred, he was not a party to the transactions and cannot provide direct evidence or testimony about them," the letter said. "In contrast, when presented with similar trading patterns involving transactions in which he or his subordinates *were* direct participants, generally he has either claimed not to recall the matter or offered benign explanations for the trading while disavowing direct knowledge of what occurred. Thus, Milken has been least helpful regarding matters as to which he could be most helpful." Without identifying the Reliance situation by name, the letter cited it as an example: "Milken could not recall any specific conversations about the arrangement despite the fact that the trades occurred over a six-month period and required commitments of capital by Drexel totalling approximately $440 million. Nor could Milken recall any specific discussion with the customer during the course of the arrangement although he acknowledged speaking to the customer regularly concerning trading matters and, more significantly, two financings Drexel underwrote for the customer during the period. Thus, while Milken brought the subject matter to the Commission's attention, it is difficult on this record to credit substantially his coöperation."



Milken's lawyers were furious over the S.E.C. letter, and remain so. "It was outrageous," Liman says. "Michael deserved the letter he got from the prosecutors for lots of reasons. Is conforming your story to what some S.E.C. lawyer believes on the basis of preconceived notions the only way you can get a positive letter from the S.E.C.? Michael would never do this. It's easy to compose stories, to spin stories, to ingratiate yourself. But Michael would never tell a story different from the way he remembered it."

Milken's lawyers also submitted extensive new affidavits, which extolled Milken's record as a model prisoner, including letters from grateful inmates who had got their high-school-equivalency diplomas. "Milken's time in Pleasanton was the most constructive of anybody who's ever been incarcerated," Liman says. "He's an inspirational teacher. He went to inner-city schools. He taught them algebra. He overcame their fear of mathematics by teaching them math with games. He did this on his own time. They wanted to degrade him. But Michael has character." The lawyers also cited Milken's role in the civil settlement and tried to make the most of everything he had told the government.

Confronted with the differing letters from the S.E.C. and the United States Attorney's office, and puzzled by the characterization of Milken's assistance as "substantial," Judge Wood called another hearing. Relations between the United States Attorney's office and the S.E.C. had deteriorated to the point where the prosecutors tried to keep the S.E.C. lawyers from attending, but McLucas insisted that his people be there.

The hearing was held on June 25th. Judge Wood seemed to go out of her way to offer the government an opportunity to toughen its characterization of Milken. For example, she had previously asked in a conference call whether the government wanted her to weigh Milken's testimony in the Ostrander case against the arguments for his sentence reduction, and Carroll said no—even though that testimony buttressed the government's claims at the Fatico hearing that Judge Wood had presided over. She asked Carroll point-blank about the allegations of perjury in the letter, but he wasn't willing to press the matter—even though Judge Wood herself had already ruled against Milken on the disappearance-of-evidence issue.

The fact is that Milken's lawyers had threatened to insist on yet another evidentiary hearing, demanding that the government prove any fresh allegations against Milken. At this late stage, Carroll simply may not have had the stamina for another full-blown proceeding.

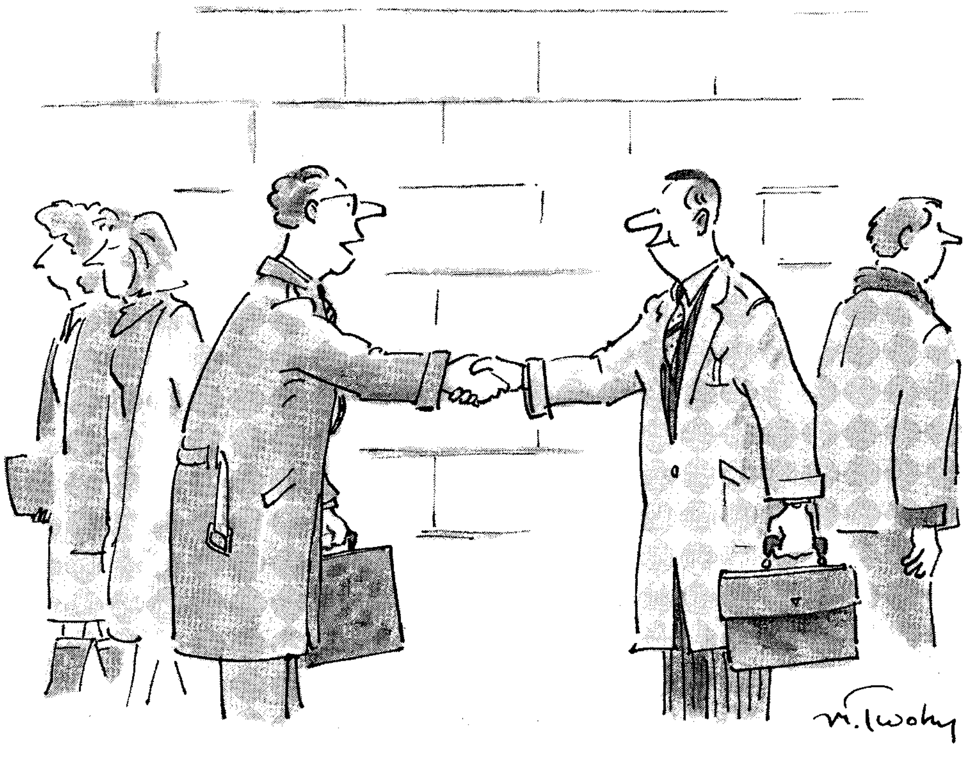
"Your Honor," Carroll told Wood, "I wouldn't call someone a perjurer unless I could prove them a perjurer. And we do not begin to have the evidence here that would cause the government to walk into the grand jury and charge someone with perjury." He reviewed the testimony of witnesses who had contradicted Milken. "At the end of the day . . . we have competing versions of events," he said. "It's a situation where there is not clear-cut proof of who is truthfully recalling the past and who is not." At one point, in response to Judge Wood's questioning, Carroll all but threw up his hands. "We do recognize, Your Honor, that coming to some final determination of candor on all these issues is a swamp, and it's a swamp that we do not wish to invite Your Honor to get down into," he said. "We think that this now five-year-old case could be ten years old before we ever finish evaluating all those issues." At another point, he said, "If, at the end of it, it's a little mushy, I think it's because, in good faith, we have come to a somewhat mushy conclusion."

Ultimately, Judge Wood had little choice but to rely on the prosecution's characterization of Milken's assistance as "substantial." As she approached her final decision, she faced two broad goals: to be fair to Milken, crediting him where it was appropriate, and to benefit society, both by deterring future crime and by putting Milken in a position where he could do some good. It seemed clear that Milken had a lot to give. The letters from inmates seemed genuine. He did have a talent for teaching, and he was good with children. He was banned from the securities industry for life. What benefit, then, would further incarceration yield? At the same time, it was important that his jail time be perceived as a significant punishment.

As Judge Wood began her analysis, she started with the maximum forty-month term to which she had originally intended to sentence him. For his tutoring work and his prison behavior he was automatically credited under parole guidelines with four months. That left thirty-six months. She still had to consider his coöperation, and his assistance in reaching the settlement of civil claims. (Milken had not yet been diagnosed with prostate cancer, so that was not a consideration.) Of these factors, coöperation was by far the most important. Shortly after her appointment to the bench, Judge Wood had conducted a survey of her fellow-judges in the Southern District and found that in cases where coöperation was deemed substantial their policies ranged from eliminating the entire jail term to cutting it in half. Judge Wood herself had reduced prison terms by ninety per cent in such instances. By that standard, Milken's term would be cut to time served, and he would be released immediately. In the final analysis, Judge Wood didn't go that far. In granting him a reduction of just twelve months—a third of his term—she had in fact meted out the harshest sentence she'd ever given someone whose assistance had been described as substantial.

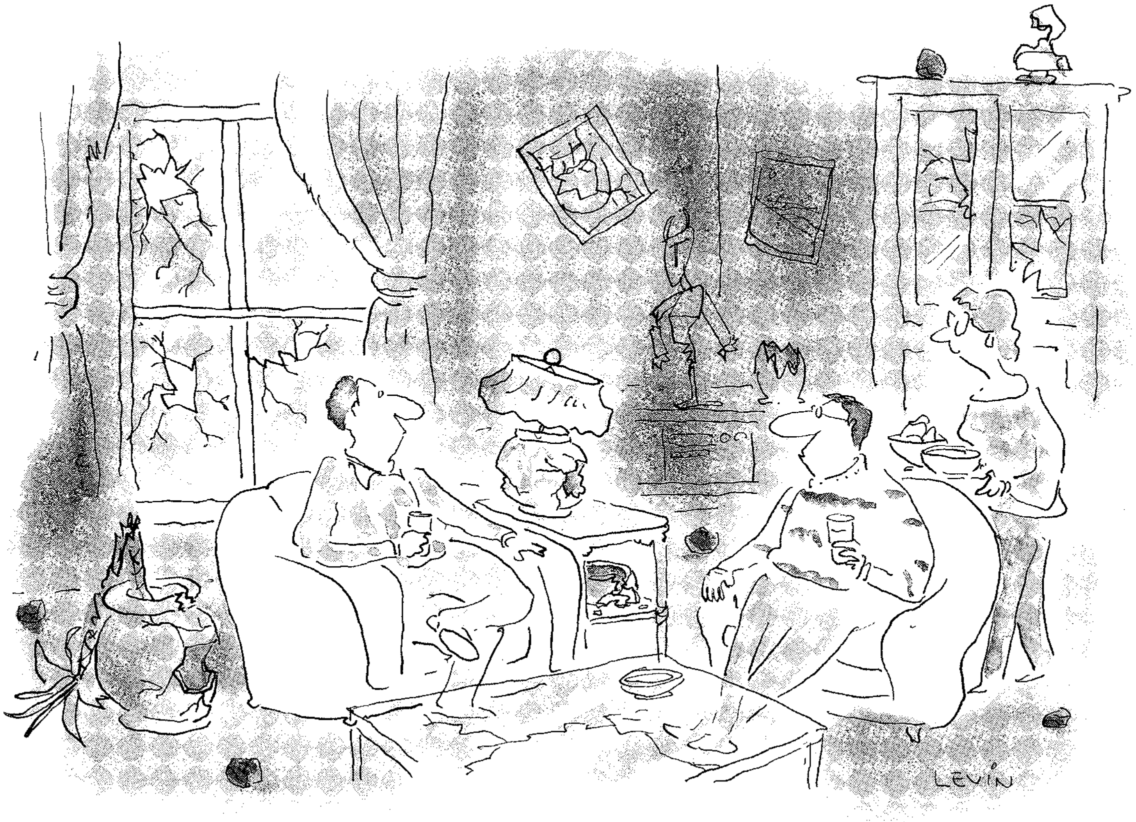
Judge Wood's logic may have been impeccable, but the public reaction was predictable, given the misperception that his sentence had just been cut from ten years to two. McLucas talked to Carroll and Cunningham on the day the reduction was announced, and he says that they were "devastated" by the public reaction. "You had to pick them up off the floor." Carroll says he was actually "nauseated." His primary concern, after all the years he'd worked on the case, was history's verdict. "This was the last word, and the last word was ambiguous. That's unfortunate." Milken, of course, was elated. His release was now imminent, and he'd survived without having to damage his reputation by admitting further guilt and with much of his fortune intact.

Milken's lawyers asked almost immediately that he be allowed to move to a halfway house in Los Angeles; prison guidelines permit up to six months in a halfway house in cases such as Milken's. But Milken wasn't allowed to move until January, when he had just two months left in custody. When he emerged from prison, Milken had lost several pounds and looked older, in part because he'd abandoned his toupee. Other inmates spent their free time weight-



"Jim! Long time. Are you still making your own granola?"

lifting and jogging, but Milken had kept himself too busy. After the first few weeks, Milken spent little time in the halfway-house Hollywood bungalow to which he was assigned. In an ironic twist, he was paid a nominal amount to work for Richard Sandler, his own lawyer. The halfway house let him move back into his home in Encino as long as he called in every day and was home by a specified hour every evening. During a physical exam, his doctor discovered that he was in the early stages of prostate cancer. Milken hasn't yet shown any symptoms of the disease, and when prostate cancer is detected and treated so early it often has little or no effect. But it is too soon to tell to what extent the disease will absorb Milken's energies and attention.



"We're just a stone's throw from everything."

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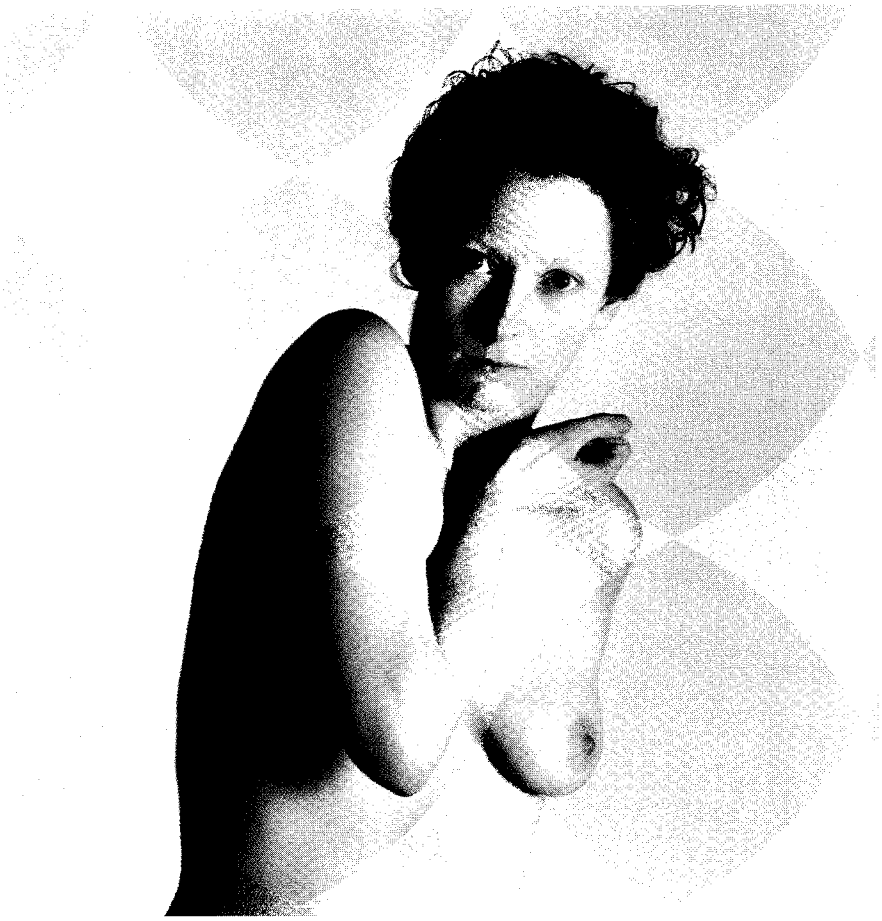
THE debate over whether Milken's punishment fitted his crimes will probably go on for years. With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to make the case that the prosecutors and the S.E.C. should have been more draconian. Milken's millions did buy a superb defense, one that shaped public opinion to a remarkable degree and waged a war of attrition against an undermanned and underfunded government prosecution team, leaving the lawyers worn down and with little appetite to carry the fight through the coöperation and sentencing process. Clearly, it was a mistake to call Milken as a government witness in Rosenthal; it was an even bigger mistake to promise him credit for "substantial assistance." It was probably a mistake to try Rosenthal at all; the tradeoff between Rosenthal's light punishment and the benefit to Milken wasn't worth it.

It is much harder to fault Judge Wood. In the eyes of those most knowledgeable about the case—lawyers from the Justice Department, the S.E.C., and the defense bar—she did a superb job of reconciling public policy and individual justice in a case that excited the passions of the entire nation. In a rare comment on another judge's work, Judge Pollack, who presided over the civil cases against Milken, says, "It's none of my business, but she was right the first time"—when she meted out the ten-year sentence—"and right the second time, and I told her so in just those words." In sentencing Milken to ten years when she really meant to have him serve forty months, she may have been trying to have it both ways, and so may have misled the public. But the ten-year pronouncement did have the desired impact. Wall Street is, at least for the time being, a more careful, more law-abiding place. And Milken was punished. His world turned upside down in 1986, the minute Ivan Boesky named him to government investigators, and thus his ordeal lasted seven years, not just twenty-four months.

Judge Wood, fresh from her own meteoric moment in national politics, is currently shaping a three-year community-service program for Milken. Charitable organizations have been seeking his services, more for the money he can contribute than for the work he can perform. Judge Wood will surely avoid that, and place him where he can use his talents and energy in behalf of the public. While a final decision hasn't yet been made, Milken is expected to be assigned to an inner-city organization where his duties will range from education to administration.

Perhaps history's verdict will be kinder than any of the participants now believe. Perhaps Milken, facing a possibly grave illness even as he starts a new chapter in his life, will stop brooding over the image of him that was created in the eighties and seek to build a new one for the nineties. Perhaps Carroll's fear that the sentence reduction renders the government's prosecution ambiguous will not be borne out. For the matter of whether Milken served twenty-four months or forty months in prison shouldn't obscure a more important truth: the man who was perhaps the richest man in America couldn't buy his way out. ♦

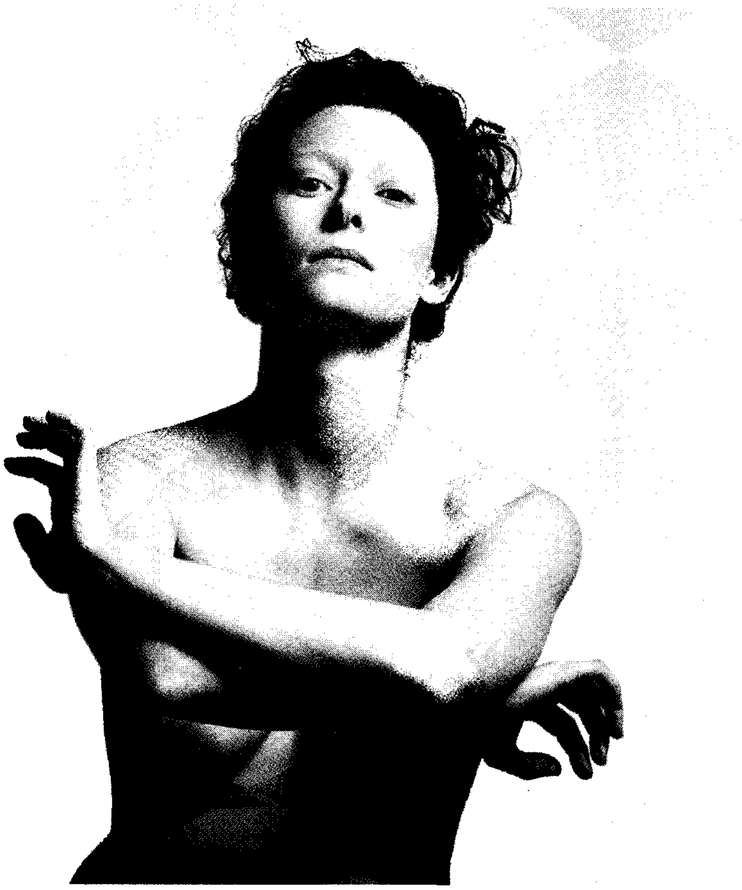


ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

SWINTON'S TIME

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD AVEDON

Tilda Swinton, born in 1960, and educated at Cambridge. First appeared in Derek Jarman's "Caravaggio"; subsequent appearances in his "Edward II" and, as Lady Ottoline Morrell, in his "Wittgenstein." Swinton stars in Sally Potter's adaptation of Virginia Woolf's "Orlando," which opens the Museum of Modern Art's New Directors/New Films festival, on March 19th, and will be released here in May.



Tilda Swinton, January 20, 1993, London.

CULTURAL PURSUITS

DECONSTRUCTING SONDHEIM

It's not just that Stephen Sondheim—whose work is celebrated in a New York stage revue opening next month—writes musicals that are unlike anything the American theatre has known before. Even his method of composition is revolutionary.

BY STEPHEN SCHIFF

STEPHEN SONDHEIM'S most famous game took place in Manhattan on Halloween, 1968. It required twenty people (preferably young theatre Turks like Herbert Ross, Nora Kaye, Lee Remick, Mary Rodgers, and Roddy McDowall), four limousines, complicated maps full of numbers and arrows, and a sack of perplexing props: scissors, bits of string, pins. Each team of five had to drive to a spot designated on the map, and there they would find a clue telling them where to go next; the trouble was, the clues were numbers, and there was no way of knowing how they might be revealed. One destination was a bustling bowling alley in which the last lane was curiously empty; there stood a single enigmatic pin, which you had to bowl over in such a way that you glimpsed the number written on the side. Another site proved to be nothing but a nondescript door with a mail slot. But if you stuck your ear near the slot, you could hear the faint voice of Frank Sinatra singing "One for My Baby"—which might still have stumped you unless you recognized that the lyric begins, "It's a quarter to three." A quarter to three: the number was 245. Then there was the vestibule of a brownstone, where a small elderly woman (actually, the mother of Anthony Perkins, Sondheim's fellow game designer) would beckon you upstairs for some coffee and a slice of cake. Those who actually ate the cake stood no chance of winning: the clue was drawn in the icing.

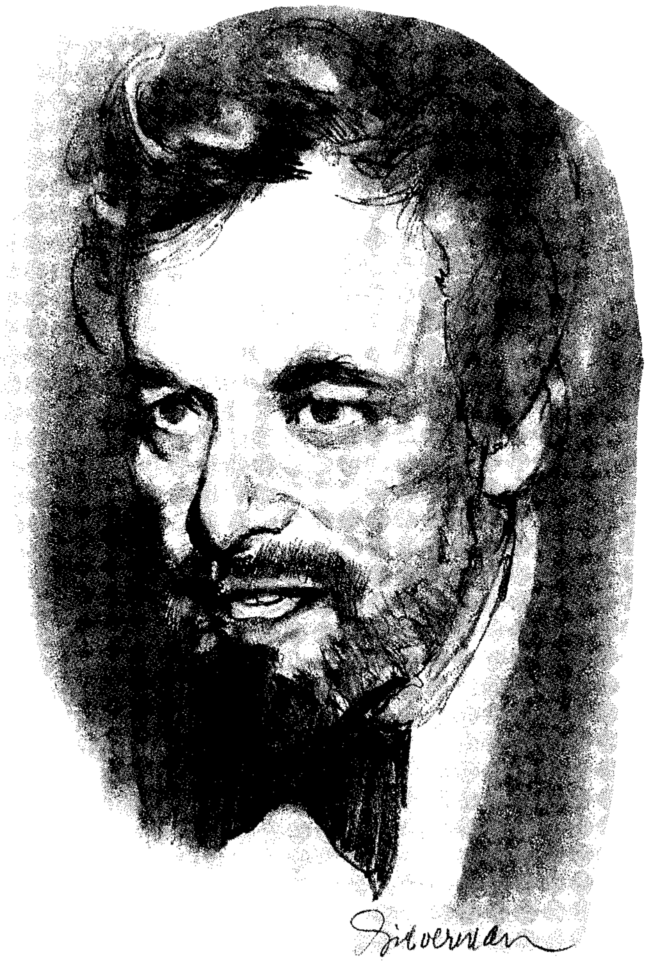
"That was one of the last of the big game parties," Sondheim says. "Toward the end of the sixties, beginning of the seventies, I don't know—it just stopped. Everybody outgrew them except me." When you enter his five-story town house in midtown Manhattan, the first thing you notice, besides an enormous black poodle named Max, is his antique-game collection: on the walls, in glass museum cases, on various low tables. Most of the items look faintly sinister: here is something called Schimmel, or Ball and Hammer and here an inscrutable British concoction, Squails, and, behind the sofa, his earliest acquisition—the ghastly New and Fashionable Game of the Jew, a dice game devised in 1811 that, according to Sondheim, "taught kids to be anti-Semitic. But all the games you see here are very nice to look at and real boring," he adds. "This thing about games— I'm not really fascinated with games."

For a moment, I am nonplussed. Sondheim is most famous, of course, as the composer and lyricist who transformed the American musical theatre with shows like "Company," "Follies," "Pacific Overtures," "Sweeney Todd," and "Sunday in the Park with George." But he is only slightly less famous for his obsession with games. It was Sondheim who was the inspiration for Anthony Shaffer's play "Sleuth," in which two master game players attempt to trick each other to death (Shaffer's original title was "Who's Afraid of Stephen Sondheim?"); it was Sondheim whose murder-game parties inspired the director Herbert Ross to hire him (along with Anthony Perkins) to write the movie "The Last of Sheila"; it was Sondheim who, at the behest of Gloria Steinem, spent eighteen months devising cryptic puzzles for *New York*. "Ah, puzzles," he says. "Not games. Puzzles. Big difference. That's a whole other matter. All art—symphonies, architecture, novels—it's all puzzles. The fitting together of notes, the fitting together of words have by their very nature a puzzle aspect. It's the creation of form out of chaos. And I believe in form. But since music and lyrics and novels and essays, et cetera, exist in time you want some surprises. A bad jigsaw puzzle is where people put five pieces together and say, 'Oh, I see. It's a cow.' You don't want everybody ahead of you all the time. Same thing with plotting a play. If the people are ahead of you, they're looking at their watches until you get to where they already are. The idea is not necessarily to startle them but to surprise them."

Sondheim's songs make a fetish of surprise, especially in their melodies, which squirm and double back on themselves, and even end seemingly in mid-phrase—anything to avoid predictability. His lyrics carom among unexpected puns and rhymes and ironic puffs of imagery that blow a song's apparent meaning off course. And his shows concern themselves with peculiar things: "Pacific Overtures" is a Kabuki-flavored account of the arrival of Commodore Perry on the shores of Japan, in 1853; "Sweeney Todd" is a penny dreadful about a serial killer in nineteenth-century London; "Sunday in the Park with George" explores what it might have been like to be Georges Seurat painting his masterpiece; "Into the Woods" plays mix-and-match with the Brothers Grimm. Sondheim has always said that he never set out to revolutionize an art form, but that is precisely what he did: he and his collaborators grabbed the musical by the scruff and hauled it from the dreamy classicism of Rodgers and Hammerstein into the jittery, anomic modernist era—and beyond.

Which was not where most theatregoers wanted to go. Sondheim may have won six Tonys and the Pulitzer Prize for drama (for "Sunday in the Park with George"), but his shows tend to be distanced, acerbic, uncomforting; his melodies are regularly taken to task for being "unhummable," his lyrics for being "cold," his characters for being "unlikable." Sondheim musicals flop as often as they succeed; and, with the exception of "Send In the Clowns" and "Putting It Together" (the latter made famous by its recurrent appearances in Xerox commercials), the songs he has composed remain largely unfamiliar to the general public. And yet, at sixty-two, Sondheim is the preëminent figure in the American musical theatre, at once its greatest resource, its most overpowering influence, and its bête noire. The bus-tour legions that keep "Cats" and "Miss Saigon" alive mostly ignore him, but what was once a tiny cult has burgeoned: "Putting It Together," the revue of thirty-two Sondheim songs that begins performances at New York's Manhattan Theatre Club on March 2nd, sold out its non-subscriber tickets within six hours. (Sondheim modestly maintains that that's because Julie Andrews is in it, and her New York stage appearances are rare.)

WE are accustomed to thinking of composers the way old movies about Chopin and Tchaikovsky depict them, as sensitive reeds harrowed by birdsong and wind, pouring their heartbreak into their scores. But Sondheim is peculiarly anti-romantic. He has always lived alone (except for employees), and no one can remember his ever being in love. Though he has composed several love songs of an extraordinary purity, his work more typically sounds jaundiced on the subject: it views love as scary or compromised or an enormous mistake. For better and for worse, his is the most systematic and unsentimental mind that has ever addressed itself to the American musical—the sort of mind one might more easily imagine designing particle accelerators, or computer viruses too wily to destroy. "The first music teacher I had at Williams College was a man named Robert Barrow," he says. "And everybody hated him because he was very dry, and I thought he was wonderful because he was very dry. And Barrow made me realize that all my romantic views of art were nonsense. I had always thought an angel came down and sat on your shoulder and whispered in your ear 'dah-dah-dah-DUM.' Never occurred to me that art was something worked out. And suddenly it was the skies opening up. As soon as you find out what a leading tone is, you think, Oh my God. What a diatonic scale is—Oh my God! The logic of it. And, of course, what that meant to me was: Well, I can do that. Because you just don't know. You think it's a talent, you think you're born with this thing. What I've found and what I believe is that everybody is talented. It's just that some people get it developed and some don't."



Sondheim is the American musical theatre's greatest resource, its most overpowering influence, and its bête noire.

But is logic everything in music? Is there nothing beyond the system?

"If there's any role for inspiration, I think it comes from the collaboration. Something has to stimulate you. I'm always amazed when people say, 'Why don't you write plays?' Well, one of the reasons is that I don't have ideas for plays—except for murder mysteries and things. I have ideas for plots but not for plays. And Jerome Robbins once said to me, 'Yes, you have lots of ideas for shows. You just don't recognize them as ideas.' That's an interesting point. Everybody has ideas, but it has to be pointed out to them that that's an idea worth developing. That's what a good teacher does. Or a good collaborator. Everybody underestimates the role of the collaborator, the guy who writes the book. George Furth wrote 'Company' and 'Merrily We Roll Along'—those are *his* characters. John Weidman wrote 'Pacific Overtures' and 'Assassins.' Those are his characters. They invented them. I helped enhance them, but they invented them. It's no coincidence that 'Into the Woods' is about parents and children. James Lapine wrote that libretto, and he was having a baby at the time."

Sondheim isn't looking at me as he says all this. What he's doing is what he will do throughout our conversation: he's rubbing his eyes, which are smudgy and almond-shaped and look as though they'd been rubbed a lot over the years. (In 1970, the documentarian D. A. Pennebaker made a film of the recording sessions for the original-cast album of "Company"; in it, a younger, pudgier Sondheim can be seen instructing the orchestra while violently kneading those weary eyes.) Sondheim is at once compact and commanding, with a Mephistophelian beard and a head of rebellious gray curls. Veins slither along his temples, and his eyes, when he can leave them alone, pop at you in a way that seems unaccountably crocodilian—or William Buckleyan. He is famous for being intimidating, impatient with small talk, prickly and hypercritical, and there are occasionally signs of those darker humors as we converse. But by all accounts Sondheim has grown calmer and more reserved over the years. "As a young man, he was very nervous," Herbert Ross recalls. "He was very nice, but nervous and highstrung. And everybody around him was very aware of his extraordinary gifts."

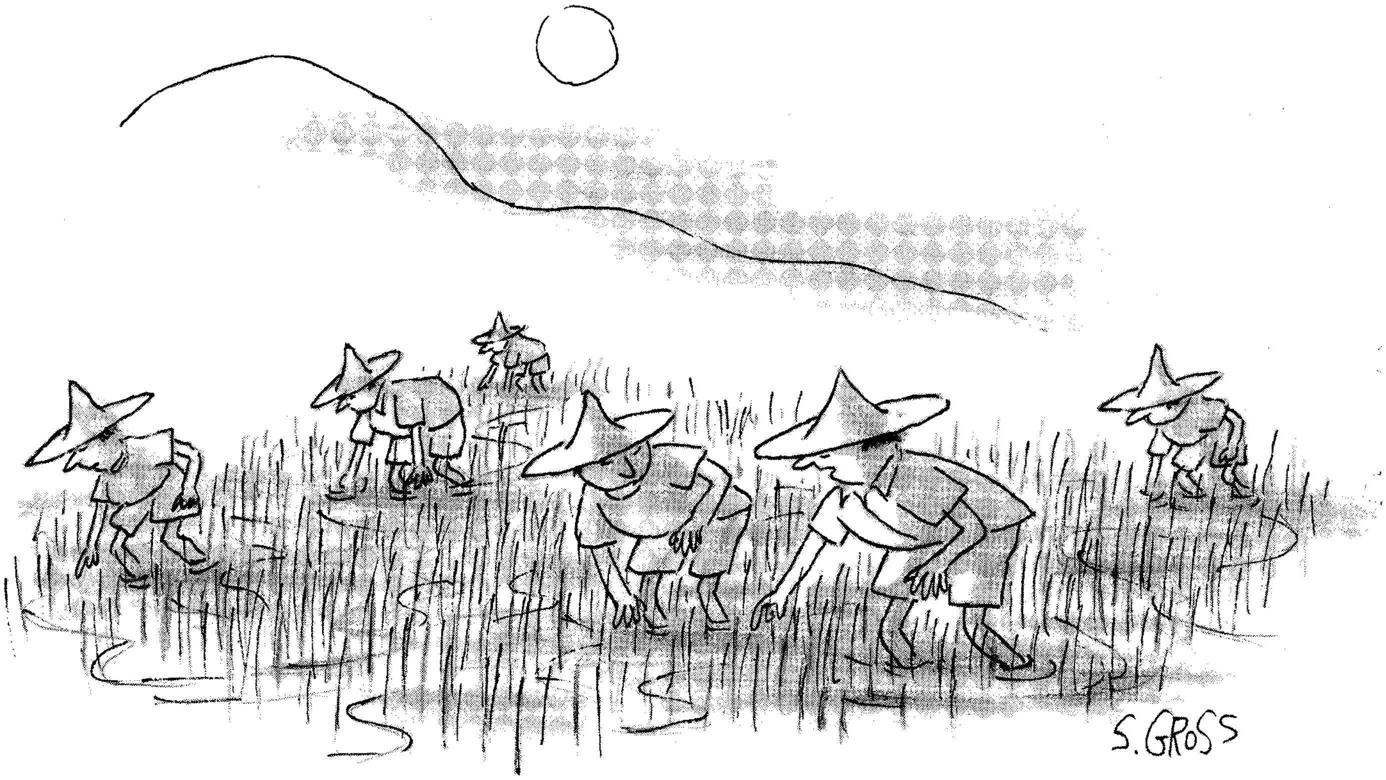
Sondheim, in fact, was a sort of Broadway dauphin, seemingly born to be the Next Big Thing. From the beginning, he was a Park Avenue New Yorker, his father a well-to-do dress manufacturer and his mother a designer in her husband's firm. But when Stephen was ten, his parents divorced, and his mother, who retained custody of her son and only child, moved to a farm in Bucks County, Pennsylvania—three miles from the home of the lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II. Sondheim was ripe for a surrogate father, especially since he didn't like his mother much. (According to his friend Mary Rodgers, the daughter of the composer Richard Rodgers, Sondheim would years later send her a thank-you note that read, "Dear Mary and Hank, Thanks for the plate, but where was my mother's head? Love, Steve.")

"My mother was very angry at my father for leaving her, and she used me as a whipping boy," Sondheim says. "And she also had a set of values that even at that age I knew were suspect, in that she liked celebrities and money a lot. And, in a way, it was lucky for me, because I never would have met the Hammersteins if she hadn't liked celebrities. They had a son my age, Jamie, and we became fast friends, and that's how I sort of got adopted by them. Oscar took an interest in my interest in music." With Hammerstein's instruction and encouragement, he began writing musicals, first at the Quaker boarding school to which his mother had sent him, and then at Williams, where he eventually took a two-year fellowship that let him study with the avant-garde composer Milton Babbitt. Then he hit New York, there to spend several years hanging out with a gang of prospective theatre titans that included Harold Prince (who went on to direct every Sondheim show from "Company" through "Merrily We Roll Along"), Herbert Ross, the writers Burt Shevelove and James and William Goldman, and Mary Rodgers.

"Back in the fifties, there used to be a Walgreen's drugstore at Fifty-seventh and Seventh Avenue," Harold Prince says. "And I have a vivid memory of Steve and me sitting at the counter having a bacon-lettuce-and-tomato sandwich and talking about the musical—the state of it and our place in it. We were highly critical, the way kids are, and highly appreciative of what we liked. We loved what we loved, and we suffered what we didn't love very ungenerously. Now we're both on the other end of that. But I remember that all the earmarks of his creativity were already in his early work. Very, very slick, intelligent lyrics, lots of words, inner rhymes, music that had a modern energy. He was daring without consciously trying to be daring."

"Steve was living in the dining room of his father's apartment, on Fifth Avenue," Mary Rodgers recalls. "He didn't care what he looked like or where his clothes were. But he wasn't poor. I mean, he was down at the heels in a fairly luxurious way. There's a way of having money and not having money. His father would never have let him starve to death, but for some people to have an income in those days of ten thousand dollars a year would have been just enough to destroy their ambition. That would never have been the case with Steve. There was something so passionate and determined and committed about him that it was hard for any of us to imagine Steve not succeeding. Because it was either that or death."

At the age of twenty-five, he was introduced to Leonard Bernstein, who listened to an unproduced Sondheim score called "Saturday Night" and quickly hired him to write lyrics



"I hate to admit it. I'm taking bran and I'm feeling better."

for "West Side Story." Sondheim regarded this as a setback. Lyrics were a sideline for him; what he really wanted to do was compose. The words he contributed to "West Side Story" and the project that followed it, Jule Styne's great musical "Gypsy," were brilliant, but they brought him little personal acclaim; reviewers rarely singled out his contribution. And Sondheim grew increasingly frustrated.

At thirty-two, he managed to get his first show as a composer-lyricist produced, and it proved a big hit—the biggest, in fact, that he's had. "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" (1962) was a vertiginous combination of Plautus and Borscht Belt, for which Sondheim's songs served as a kind of respite between stretches of frenetic door-slamming farce. But his next production, "Anyone Can Whistle" (1964), which was a ramshackle ode to nonconformism and the virtues of insanity, disappeared after only nine performances, and after writing the lyrics for Richard Rodgers' dispiriting "Do I Hear a Waltz?" (1965) Sondheim went through what he calls a "lazy period." "I just didn't turn out much work," he says. "I don't know the reason for it. It's just that no one was pushing me, and I need to be pushed."

Five years passed. The sixties were ending, and all the hopes deposited in hippiedom and Yippiedom were dying with them. Sondheim had been too old to get caught up in the rock culture, but he was among the first to diagnose the new spirit of deflation and cultural fatigue. In 1970, he reappeared, with a show that changed Broadway forever. "Company" might be called the first modernist musical; certainly it was the first successful musical that did away with plot completely. Its interlocking vignettes about alienation and conjugal jitters all take place in the minute when its hero, a perennial bachelor named Bobby, arrives at a birthday party thrown for him by married friends. Around that minute Sondheim, with the librettist, George Furth, and the producer-director, Harold Prince, built a stripped-down, stylish show in which song, situation, and character blended the way form and function do in a Mies van der Rohe tower. "Company" managed to be pessimistic and exuberant at the same time; it derived a kind of demonic energy from the disconnections of urban life, and it didn't have a saccharine moment in it. In short, it felt grown-up.

Almost immediately, Sondheim moved beyond it. His next effort, "Follies" (1971), was, like "Company," plotless, but even more ambitious—a musical about the death of the musical. "Follies" placed its audience at a reunion of retired showgirls, where old romances stir and crumble, and aging beauties confront their dissolution; on top of it all, Sondheim composed a series of pastiche songs that deftly recapitulated the history of musical theatre—from vaudeville to torch song to Rodgers and Hammerstein. If "Company" was modernism brought to the musical stage, "Follies" was a postmodernist hall of mirrors. When Michael Bennett's "A Chorus Line" arrived, four years later, and was greeted as revolutionary, theatre insiders could say they had already seen the revolution—and it hadn't paid back its investors. ("Follies" lost eight hundred thousand dollars.)

"A Little Night Music" (1973) proved more profitable. A loose adaptation of Ingmar Bergman's film "Smiles of a Summer Night," it was a frothy but knowing meditation on romance and its deceptions, and the music Sondheim wrote for it was a series of masterly experiments in 3/4 time. As clever as it was, though, "Night Music" was probably Sondheim's "safest" show (it produced his biggest hit song, "Send In the Clowns"). And he would never play it so safe again. His experiments grew bolder—with mixed results. Of the shows he has written since 1973, only one, "Sweeney Todd" (1979), seems to me a complete artistic success. But even among his more compromised works there are revelations. "Pacific Overtures" (1976) has long passages of tedium, but it also has two or three of the most exquisite songs ever written for the the-

"She turned fourteen years old this week, but we think she's ageless."

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atre; “Sunday in the Park with George” (1984) and “Into the Woods” (1987) have splendid first acts, and second acts that feel forced, tacked on, and message-heavy. Then, there are his two big flops: “Merrily We Roll Along” (1981), which attempted to freshen a conventional story of bright-eyed youth hardening into corrupted middle age by telling it backward, and “Assassins” (1990), his latest show, which used some of his loveliest music to dress up mildewed insights into why people want to kill the President of the United States.

Sondheim took the flops hard. When “Merrily” closed after only sixteen performances, he considered giving up the Broadway musical altogether. “I was discouraged mainly by what I felt was the hostility that was directed against Hal and me, both by the critics and by the theatre buffs. It was very cruel. I think it always drove people crazy that we did these—in their eyes—experimental shows and we weren’t starving. Drove them crazy. I don’t think they minded at all when Rodgers and Hammerstein had hit after hit after hit, because those were the same show over and over again.” He is tossing his head back and forth now, like an impatient horse at the starting gate, and his voice has gone up a pitch or two. “I actually overheard a remark in the lobby during ‘Merrily’—someone said, ‘It’s the end of Prince and Sondheim,’ and someone else said, ‘And about time.’ It’s that kind of hostility. I found that stuff not only discouraging but infuriating. And so I didn’t want to work for a while—and for several months I didn’t. I had written ‘The Last of Sheila’ and I had always wanted to write a murder-mystery play, and so I started out writing. But the more I wrote, the more I realized, This is an avocation, not really what I want to do. I really like writing music.”

On the subject of “Merrily” and “Assassins” Sondheim feels misunderstood, and, in a way, he’s right. Both shows have beautiful scores—scores that Sondheim has worked out systematically, as is his custom. To put it another way: in both cases, it wasn’t the system that failed; it was the libretti. Sondheim’s view of his output is curious. Except for “Sweeney Todd,” which he discovered as a Christopher Bond play and seized upon as an idea for a musical, he has never initiated his shows. To his way of thinking, those who feel they can identify typical Sondheimian themes and moods in his properties—ambivalence, disillusionment, darkness, defeatism—are laboring under a delusion. As he has said, the stories come from the librettists; the themes and the atmosphere are theirs; the sentiments (or lack thereof) expressed in the songs belong not to Sondheim but to the characters the book writers have created. The only number he’ll admit is autobiographical is “Opening Doors” (from “Merrily We Roll Along”), which is about young theatre types hustling in the big city, as he once did. Otherwise, he will maintain, you can’t see the real Sondheim in his songs. If people want to scrutinize his work, let them examine his motivic compositional techniques, not the emotions the characters are venting. Given content, he devises form. He’s the guy who does the math.

GIVEN THE QUESTIONS

I’ve begun trying
to tell the truth

whenever I can—
under interrogation.

These great and stripy
red/gold apples,

how could we throw them away?
“The heart of a heartless world

is what’s at stake.” “Least said,
soonest mended.”

No reason whatever
to speak, until we’re asked.

On each face
a new construction.

True false bricks.
A mortar of silence,

telling apples,
gravitation. Apart from this,

the news is bad.
First: How far to go?

Is that too shy,
too all-is-lost?

I am not sure
what all I know.

The one last bridge
is considered crossed

at what point?
How far to go

just now?
These striped red apples

are *mine* today.
I don’t forget

what I have seen. Newton,
the myth, and then these

later ones. Things I had known
are set aside.

We will be punished
too soon. Or so we believe.

We think we know
too much to bear.

Names unnamed,
I’d dare to speak.

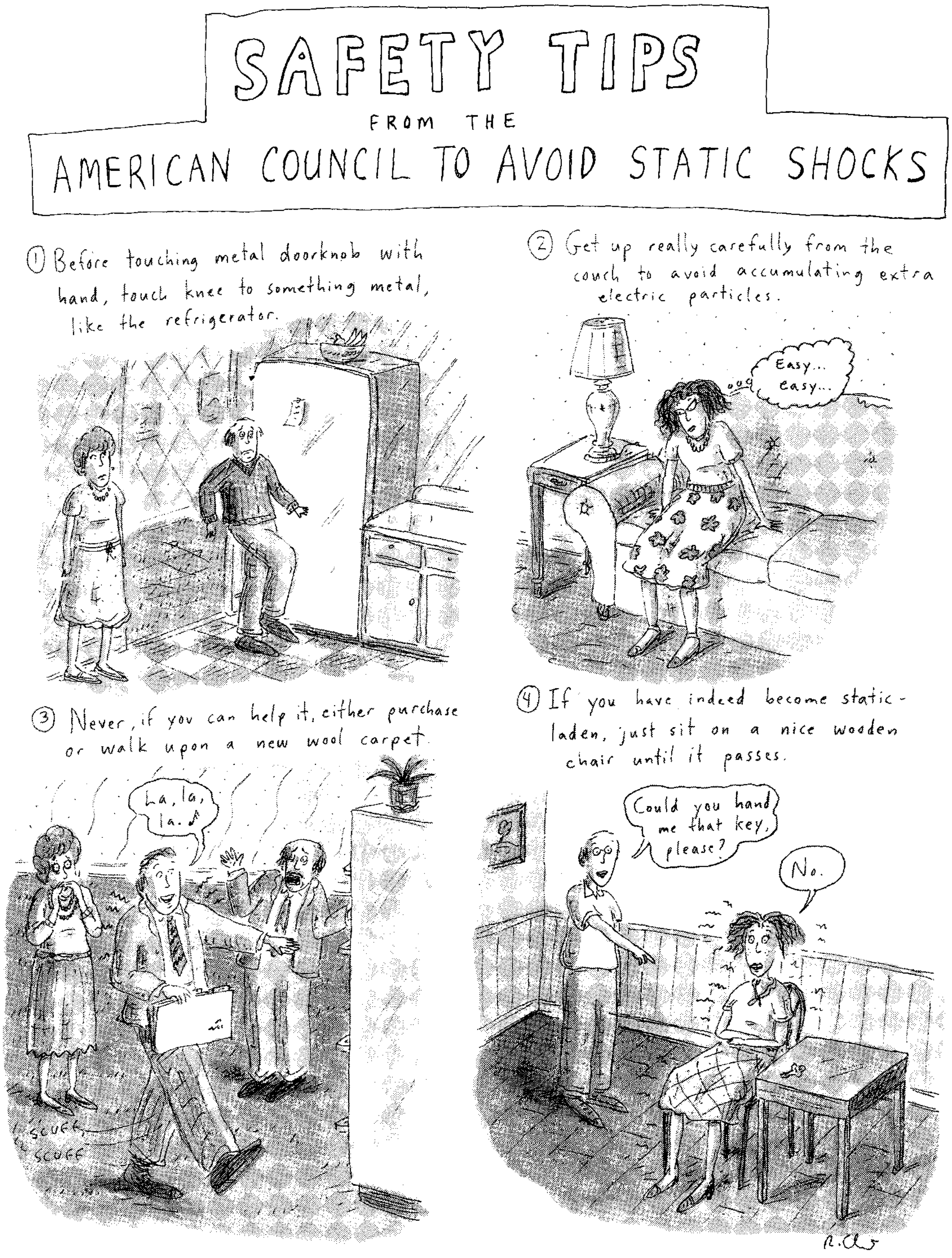
—Elizabeth Macklin

And, though the public may call his shows “Sondheim musicals,” he doesn’t. The stories that the shows tell aren’t vehicles for the expression of Sondheim’s thoughts and feelings; they’re discrete works of art, to which he simply contributes his skill. All of which has led some critics to view him as chilly and detached; he can seem to be observing the emotional storms his characters sing about as though they were something going on in a test tube. “Steve does have a certain inhibitedness about the old word *self-expression*, which is operable in his life, detectable in day-to-day existence with him,” Leonard Bernstein is quoted as saying in Craig Zadan's fascinating book "Sondheim & Co." "Nothing must be straight out subjectively because it's dangerous, because it reveals your real insides. The fear usually takes the form of the fear of corniness, or being platitudinous, or whatever. Steve has very strong feelings and therefore must invent correspondingly strong defenses to guard those feelings." Such dispassion may strike a great many people as a disturbing trait in an artist—especially if one expects Chopin mooning picturesquely at the window. But Sondheim has a different sort of ardor—the ardor of the scientist tinkering in his lab: What will work? What won't? What will happen if I turn up the temperature here?

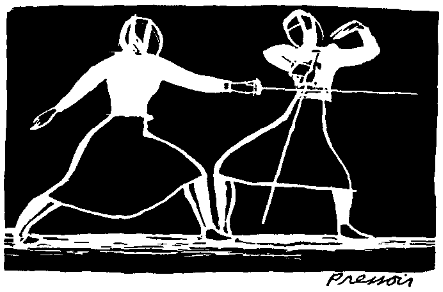
That approach may make him a better collaborator than someone who identifies more ardently with his characters and their woes. "I just love working with him," says Barbra Streisand, who has recorded several of his songs and is preparing a new album that will include several more. "Because he believes, as I do, that art is a living process, that it's not set in stone, that it breathes and it grows and it changes. It blew my mind when I said things to him like 'I never understood this song "Send In the Clowns"—what would you think about writing a second bridge that would kind of tell us more about this relationship?' And no problem. I've asked him to make a lot of changes like that, and at first we'll be on the phone and he'll say, 'Wait a minute. You can't do that.' And then he says, 'Let me call you back.' And in two hours he calls me back and it's done. I don't know quite how he does these things. He's very, very organized."

"His process was curious to me at first," James Lapine says. "I never quite knew what he was doing. On 'Sunday in the Park with George,' I wrote an entire first-act book, and he hadn't written anything—just the opening chords. And I would go home after meetings and say, 'Hmm. Is this guy ever going to write anything?' I think he was very ambivalent about every project we've done. And now that I know the way he approaches things, I know he tends to look at all the reasons why it's not a musical, why it doesn't sing, why it won't work, and you have to— Well, now I know you just keep plugging along, and eventually Steve will find a way to make it work."

Making it work is finally what counts with Sondheim. He's passionately—even selflessly—interested in the chemical reaction between what he has devised and the audience for which it's intended. "One of the things I like


SAFETY TIPS
FROM THE
AMERICAN COUNCIL TO AVOID STATIC SHOCKS
① Before touching metal doorknob with hand, touch knee to something metal, like the refrigerator.
② Get up really carefully from the couch to avoid accumulating extra electric particles.
Easy... easy...
③ Never, if you can help it, either purchase or walk upon a new wool carpet.
La, la, la. ♪
scuff, scuff
④ If you have indeed become static-laden, just sit on a nice wooden chair until it passes.
Could you hand me that key, please?
No.
R.Ch

about 'Sweeney Todd' is that, particularly in the second act, I used to look at the audience, and they didn't realize that people were singing onstage," he says. "They were so caught up in the plot that the characters might as well have been speaking. And that's terrific. Because then you're maintaining the texture and at the same time carrying the audience along in what is the most important feature of the show, which is its plot. That's why Puccini picked the plays he did—he picked really juicy plots, so that the audience would be carried along no matter what they thought of the music. That's one of the reasons I like his operas. Good stories, and something for the performers to act."



SONDHEIM'S voice is back to its customary tone now: a deep, euphonious growl, but with a pedagogical edge. He taught musical theatre at Oxford in 1990, and even in his most casual conversation one detects the impulse to instruct, to organize experience for the listener the way he himself has so painstakingly organized it in his head. The value of education is, in fact, one of Sondheim's motivating precepts. He has said that he would have been a teacher if he hadn't been a composer, and he is the chief architect of the Young Playwrights Festival, which offers writers under the age of nineteen professional help and productions of their plays. As he talks, he continually pays homage to his own pantheon of mentors, chief among them Oscar Hammerstein II.

"Oscar really was a role model for me," Sondheim says. "If he'd been a geologist, I would probably have been a geologist." When Sondheim submitted his first musical to Hammerstein, at the age of fifteen, "I expected him to put it on immediately, because I thought it was so wonderful. Of course, it was ridiculously amateur, but he treated it exactly as if it were a professional show, with no condescension—it was really, really a memorable afternoon. We went through it together, right from the first sentence, from the first stage direction. It was a satire on school, about the teachers and the student body, but he treated them as if they were real characters, and looked at them for inconsistencies, and what is this scene doing here, do you need this to tell the story, and what is the song really saying? I learned more in that afternoon than most writers do in a lifetime, and all the principles he talked about I use to this day."

And just what were those principles?

"The rules of lyric-writing have to do with intelligibility, which is the only principle in lyric-writing anyway. But there's dramatic intelligibility, theatrical intelligibility, verbal intelligibility, the way the words sit on the music. It's what the song is about, it's why the song is there, it's all about communication to an audience, and if it violates that it's, as far as I'm concerned, bad. Clarity is all-important. And there's another thing: better to be funny than clever. You know, cleverness is fun for other clever people. But to be funny has to do with attitude, situation, character."

The best thing, of course, is to combine the two, as Sondheim has done over the years more effectively than any other lyricist in memory. In "I'm Still Here," the well-known showstopper in "Follies," a trouper named Carlotta reminisces—and manages, while she's at it, to sum up the history of the twentieth century:

I've slept in shanties,
Guest of the W.P.A.
But I'm here.
Danced in my scanties,
Three bucks a night was the pay.
But I'm here.
I've stood on bread lines
With the best,
Watched while the headlines
Did the rest.
In the Depression was I depressed?
Nowhere near.

But as the song continues, and the novelty of its storytelling technique wears off, Sondheim burrows deeper into the nature of Carlotta's experience. She grows more sophisticated and world-weary, and her show-biz jokes take on a sly insider appeal, finally climaxing in this magisterial summation of almost every actress's life and times:

First you're another
Sloe-eyed vamp.
Then someone's mother.
Then you're camp.

That quatrain is funny enough, but Sondheim ornaments it with a stroke of virtuosic cleverness:

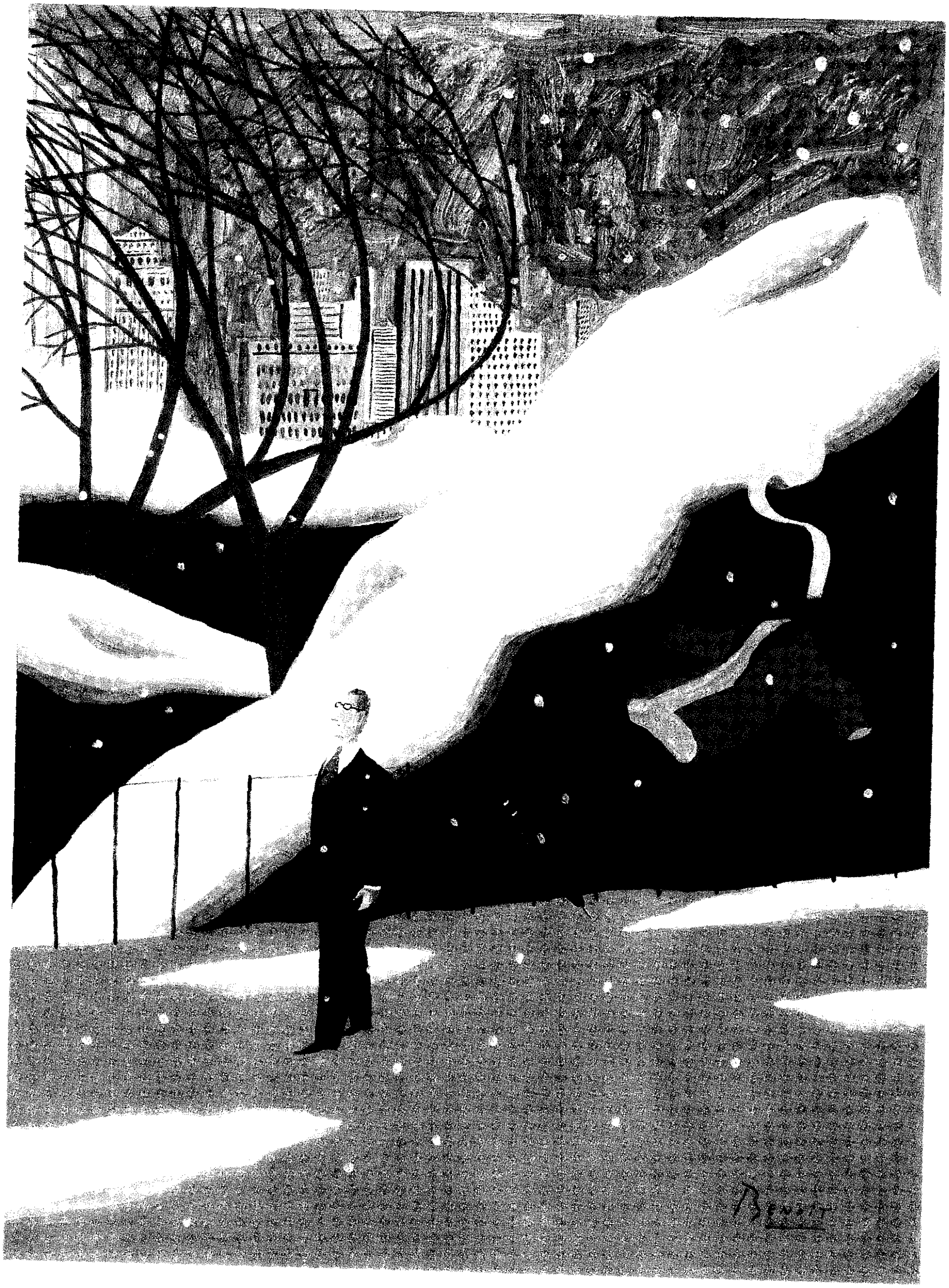
Then you career from career
To career.

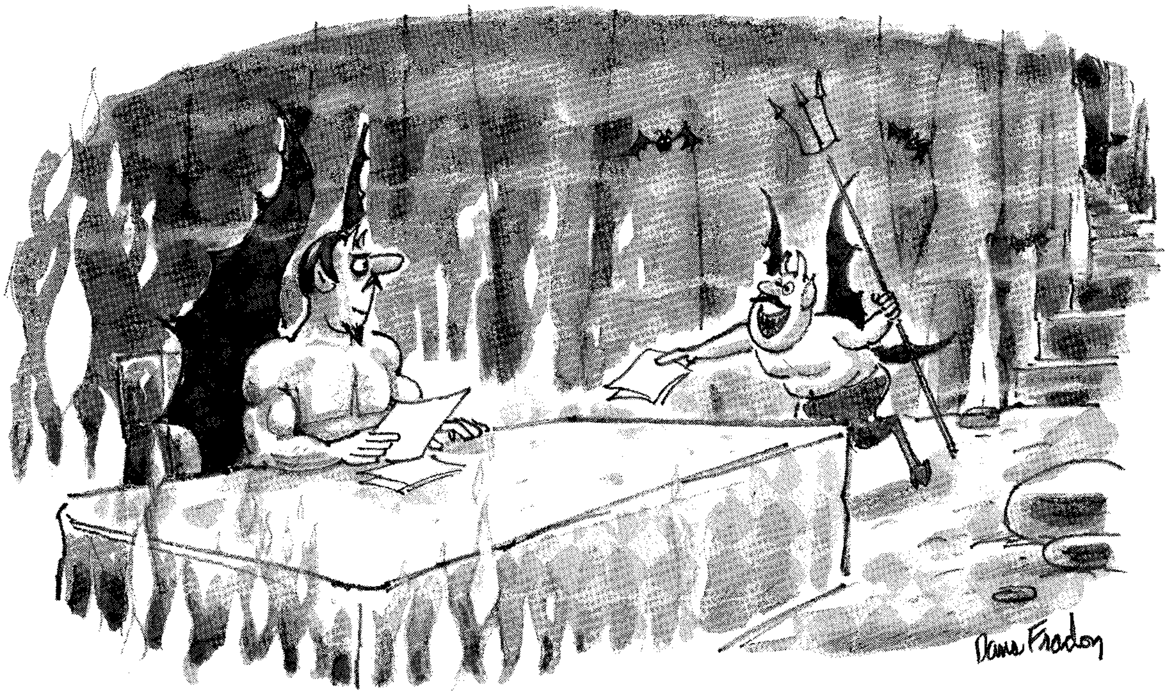
Which requires of Carlotta not only wit but the education to use "career" where most people would undoubtedly use "careen." All very dubious in a showgirl, but worth it.

Hammerstein's principles are not the only tool the Sondheim system employs. "I use a rhyming dictionary—the Clement Wood—and a thesaurus," he says, and one can see them perched prominently in his office, where he works lying down, on a daybed across the room from his grand piano. All around him are shelves stuffed with record albums, mostly the sort of nineteenth- and twentieth-century classical music you get whiffs of in his scores: Ravel, Rachmaninoff, Debussy, Prokofiev, Copland, Britten. Except for the reference works, there are virtually no books. "I don't read," Sondheim says. "I'm a slow reader, which gets in my way, and I don't enjoy prose the way I wish I could. I like reading dialogue. I tend to be, I'm afraid, hypercritical, so that if I feel a word is misplaced in a sentence right in the beginning, I don't give the author any leeway. But I've always been into words per se. Primarily, what you want a rhyming dictionary for is words like 'go,' 'do'—words that have a million rhymes. Going through a list of all the 'o' words, say, will suggest thoughts. What a thesaurus is for is cross-references. If you're looking up a synonym for 'pretty,' that will lead you to synonyms for 'attractive,' and that will lead you to synonyms for 'sexy,' and suddenly you get all kinds of references you didn't expect. I don't choose words to make my job easier; I choose them for meaning and singability, and for how they lie on the music. That's the other thing—it's all about lying on the music. The way the lyric rises and falls, accents and stresses and unstresses, it all has to do with music. I'm fairly scrupulous about syntax, making it sound

ARTIST AT LARGE BY BENOÎT VAN INNIS

IN LIKE A LION





"Good news! We've been selected as a potential burial site for nuclear waste."

• •

like the dialogue instead of twisting syntax around for the sake of a rhyme. But it also has to sit well, and when it does it's terrific, and when it doesn't it's awful."

I ask him whether he remembers songs of his in which he felt that the words didn't sit well. "Millions," he sputters. "Oh yeah. Oh God, oh yeah, oh God. Sometimes it's hard to get, and you just can't improve it. I remember writing 'Pretty Little Picture' "—from "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum"—"over the period of a year, and I just kept adding to it, because it should sound crystalline, and I got to the last section, and I just couldn't solve it, and I didn't have enough time, finally. The same thing with a few passages of 'Getting Married Today' "—from "Company." "The problem is making it so it sounds effortless for the singer. You have to be very careful about the consonants that are like a *ping*—the plosives. With plosives, the singer runs out of steam, because air comes out."

Sondheim's concern for how the song is performed emerges from another Hammerstein lesson—that song is about character. In "Sunday in the Park with George," which is in so many ways a portrait of Sondheim as a young painter, there's a number called "The Day Off," in which Seurat examines the characters he will portray in his painting "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte." But instead of studying their form (which is probably what the real Seurat did) Sondheim's George imaginatively enters their minds, trying to inhabit their perceptions and thoughts, even barking along with the dog he wants to paint. Sondheim does much the same thing when he writes. "You get inside of people, exactly the way an actor does. I act the parts, and I do it very consciously while I'm thinking about them. And also I have the playwrights. I will talk to John Weidman or James Lapine about the character, as if it were somebody they knew. And ask questions."

Sondheim regularly interviews his librettists; he even takes notes. "It's a form of picking their brains, but it's also— I want to get their style. It's very important for me to get the style of the author's writing. Sometimes I just take lines of dialogue and expand them, and sometimes what the author has written gives me a title or a refrain. 'Something's Coming' "—in "West Side Story"—"came out of a line of Arthur Laurents'. He had Riff say to Tony, 'It may be around the corner, whistling down the river, twitching at the dance—who knows?' I decided to cut out 'twitching at the dance' and use 'Who knows?' as the motif. Sometimes the librettist will write a monologue, because that distills and intensifies his style even more than a scene."

Some of Sondheim's most beautiful songs have evolved through just this process. He has said his own favorite is "Someone in a Tree" (from "Pacific Overtures"), which he adapted from a John Weidman scene. The song is one of a few Sondheim numbers ("Finishing the Hat" and "Beautiful," both from "Sunday in the Park with George," are others) that explode every previous notion of what a show tune—or, indeed, any song—can be about. Not merely romantic or psychological, or even historical, they're epistemological: they take as their subject the question of how we know what we know, how we constitute an image of the world from what we perceive of it. "Someone in a Tree" depicts the signing of the treaty between Commodore Perry and the Japanese in 1854, but the song adopts the viewpoint of two accidental observers: a ten-year-old boy in a tree, who saw the proceedings but didn't hear them, and a warrior secreted underneath the treaty house, who heard but didn't comprehend. As the song proceeds, the witnesses recognize their place in the event. The boy sings:

I was there then.
If I weren't, who's to say
Things would happen here the way
That they happened here?

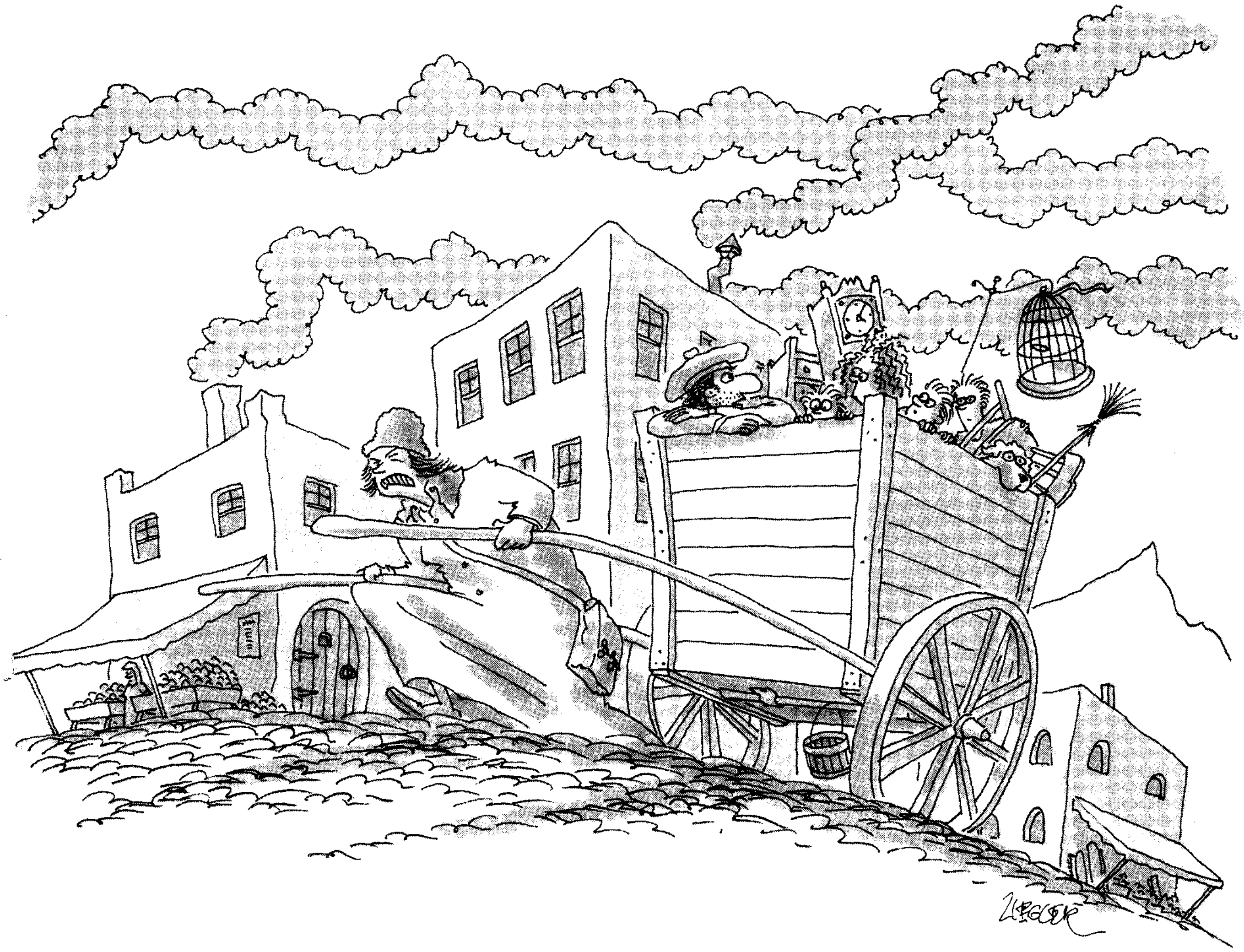
And the lyric ends in a burst of imagery that is as sublime as anything Sondheim has written:

> It's the fragment, not the day.
> It's the pebble, not the stream.
> It's the ripple, not the sea
> That is happening.
> Not the building but the beam,
> Not the garden but the stone,
> Only cups of tea
> And history
> And someone in a tree!

OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN never wrote lyrics like that. And in crediting him Sondheim seems to be constructing a kind of Oedipal paradox. Isn't he praising Hammerstein for providing him with the very tools he would later use to dismantle the Rodgers-and-Hammerstein hegemony? On the contrary, Sondheim says. "It was Oscar who taught me that content is what counts. He taught me how to structure a song like a one-act play. The revolution that he wrought, starting with 'Show Boat,' was combining the story values and character values of opera and operetta and the world of traditional musical comedy."

Before Hammerstein, the musical comedy was a kind of modular entertainment: jokes and fluffy wisps of story alternated with snappy songs, and it didn't matter very much which snappy songs went where. Working with Jerome Kern in "Show Boat" (1927) and then with Richard Rodgers in the groundbreaking "Oklahoma!" (1943) and its progeny—especially "Carousel," "South Pacific," "The King and I," and "The Sound of Music"—Hammerstein created a series of seamless dramatic visions, in which song supported story and character, and all three supported an optimistic, corny-as-Kansas world view that chimed perfectly with the gung-ho mood of postwar America. But by the end of the fifties a reaction had set in. A counterculture was forming, and its chief feature was doubt: a sense that all that Rodgers and Hammerstein cheeriness was somehow false, that the truth was double-edged, that American optimism was a form of repression, and that the family behind the white picket fence had something to hide. The simple jubilation embodied in "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'" came to seem suspicious; characters in the musical theatre could no longer face the audience and sing out what was in their hearts—not if they wanted to be believed. At the very moment when playwrights like Pinter and Albee were demonstrating that theatrical dialogue could be used to demonstrate what words hide instead of what they express, Sondheim recognized that songs could function in the same way. And therein lies his greatest advance beyond Hammerstein. What Sondheim brought to the American musical for the first time was subtext.

When Sondheim talks about subtext, he means "Give the actor something to act": the lyric is saying one thing, but



"Yessirree, kids, your mother is one heck of a gal!"

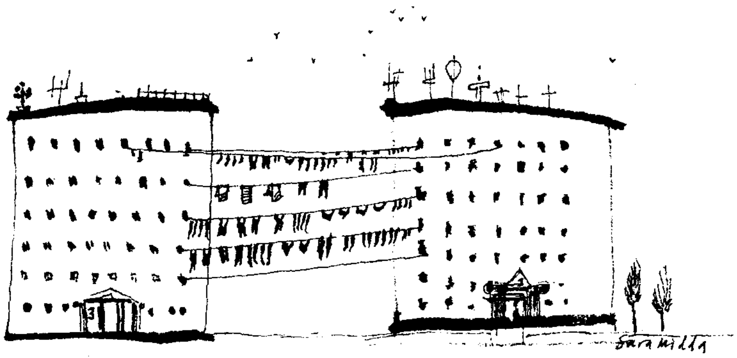
the performer onstage is demonstrating the opposite. In "Sweeney Todd," for instance, there's an anodyne duet called "Pretty Women," in which the murderous barber Todd and his nemesis Judge Turpin sing caressingly about female graces; you have to see the play to know that Todd is preparing to slit the Judge's throat as they sing.

But the subtexts that work most powerfully in Sondheim's scores are musical. His melodies may sound sweet, but dissonances lurk in the accompaniment. And Sondheim is the first writer of musicals to use motifs in the Wagnerian manner, tying themes and characters together, and probing the psychology behind what is being sung. "This is what Milton Babbitt taught me," he says. "How do you organize something that lasts twenty or thirty minutes so that it doesn't fall apart or become a series of five-minute pieces? What is it that makes Mozart's Thirty-ninth a symphony, one piece? To me, it's important that a score be not just a series of songs—that it should in some way be developed, just the way the book is. There's a great confusion these days, you know, because, with a lot of those British shows, people say they're through-composed. No, they're not through-composed, they're through-sung. They just repeat, over and over. Composition is about development, not about repetition. You move a motif along just the way you move a character; the character remains the same, but it also changes."

If Sondheim's approach to songwriting is characteristically systematic, it's also rather unusual. Most songwriters begin with a melody and fill in the accompaniment later; Sondheim begins with an accompaniment figure, with the specific pattern of chords and bass line that will ride underneath the melody. And that technique relegates melody itself to the back burner. "If I had to pick the single most important element that can allow me to go forward in a song, it would be neither the melody nor the refrain line nor any lyric," he says. "It's the accompaniment. It's what's going on inside the music. Any melodic line can be harmonized in twenty-seven different ways, and harmony is, in fact, the fingerprint of musical style. That's how you tell a Gershwin song from a Kern song, or how you tell Beethoven from Schubert. The accompaniment is what gives a song dramatic form."

Accompaniment is king in rock music, too; what Sondheim calls "accompaniment figures" a rocker might call "riffs" or, in some cases, "power chords." But Sondheim's accompaniments are far more complex, and extremely open-ended. They employ a tonal language not dissimilar to that of such early-twentieth-century composers as Rachmaninoff and Ravel, and the effect they create is of a great atmospheric wash against which one melody sounds no more appropriate than another. And also, I'm afraid, no more memorable. Sondheim's accompaniments are sumptuous, but they don't allow a melody to plunk neatly into place; they don't allow it to resolve; they don't give it a home.

Sondheim is renowned for bridling at the accusation that no one goes out of the theatre humming his tunes, and he has a reasonably good counterattack. "It's all about familiarity," he says. "Anything that's hummable immediately is something you've hummed before. Now, if a song is played ten or eleven times during the evening you'll hum it, and that's why they used to use reprises all the time. The problem with reprises is that the same situation doesn't arise a second time if you're telling a story that develops, so the reprise tends to be uncalled for. But I remember at the intermission of 'A Little Night Music' a lot of people in the lobby were whistling or humming 'A Weekend in the Country.' Why? Because it ends the first act, and they had just heard three thousand choruses of it. When Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote 'Oklahoma!' their plug tune was called 'Boys and Girls Like You and Me.' It was played in the overture, it was sung—I believe twice—in the first act, it was played in the entr'acte, it was reprised in the second act, and it was played as walk-out music. So you had a pretty good chance of hearing it. As someone once put it, familiarity breeds content."



But that's too easy. Familiarity may be necessary for a tune to be hummable, but it isn't sufficient. Some melodies are innately less hummable than others. Even after hearing "Putting It Together" in nine thousand Xerox commercials, one may still find its spidery clatter inhospitable in the shower. Is Sondheim less hummable than Gershwin or Rodgers or Kern? Of course he is, and the fault lies with his system—or, rather, with three of its components.

First, the one I've already mentioned: his reliance on accompaniment figures and a harmonic language that doesn't buttress or solidify melodies but instead makes them feel bodiless and vague. Second, his puzzle-solver's instinct. Sondheim is sometimes so afraid of making his jigsaw boring that he throws in extra pieces: there are musical surprises everywhere—dissonances, modulations, blue notes, variations for the sake of variation. He wants to write music no one has ever heard before, and he succeeds, but at a price. His songs avoid musical inevitability so diligently that the avoidance tactic itself comes to seem inevitable, and, partly for that reason, people come away with the mistaken notion that all his stuff sounds alike. It's not the sheer complexity of his music that's bothersome. The melody of Hoagy Carmichael's "Stardust" is arguably as complicated as anything Sondheim has written, but it's also supremely hummable; it moves easily from one emotional touchstone to another. Sondheim's melodies often feel as though they were pinballing from synapse to synapse.

They can be emotional, too; songs like "Too Many Mornings" or "Johanna" really soar. Yet even there Sondheim's calculations interfere. "Johanna" begins with a magnificent, arcing melody that subsides into a poignant murmur, but instead of then flowing where one feels that it wants to, the next line gets snagged on a harsh blue note. "It's funny," he says. "I thought about that blue note a lot. I did that so that the line after it would really flower. But that note still disturbs me. Sometimes there's a problem and you solve it as best you can." But the blue note, I tell him, is exactly the kind of thing that makes people think a song is unhummable. "That it's unexpected," he says, nodding. "But if it weren't then you would have heard it before. The thing is, if people sang it a few times it would suddenly be very hummable."

Perhaps. And yet the cerebration that went into that note is telling. The Sondheim system can create surprises, but it can't always make them sing.

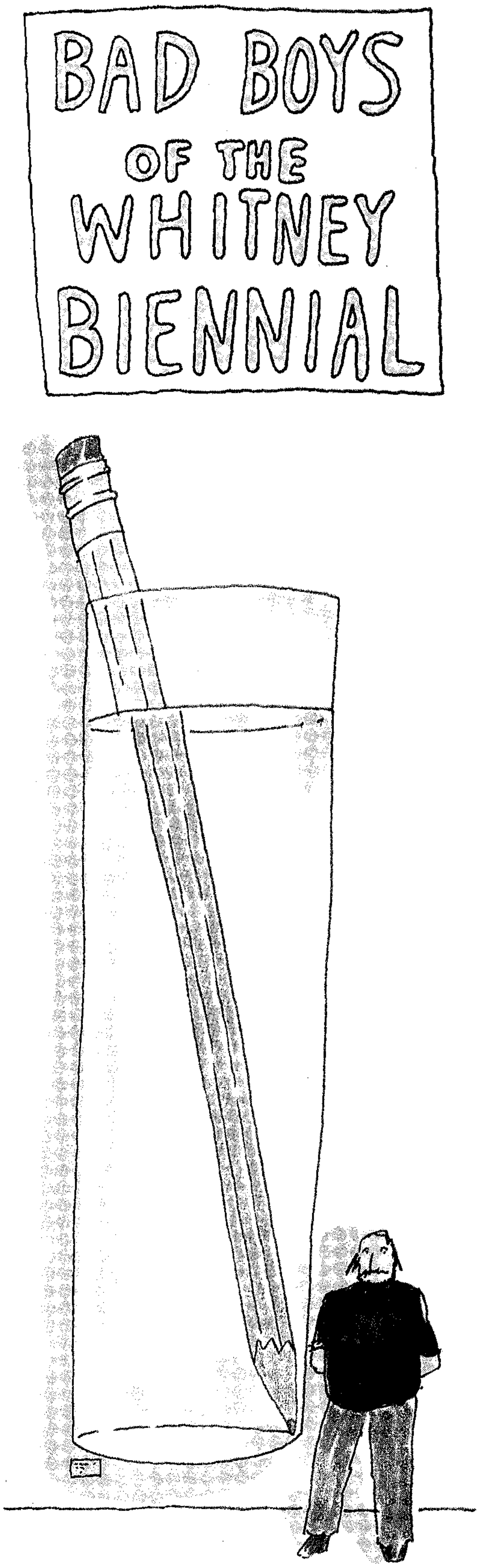
Third—and maybe this amounts to a defense of unhummability: More than any other composer in Broadway history, Sondheim fashions his melody lines for the characters who sing them. And when his characters doubt, deceive, regret, and feel ambivalent, the tunes reflect all that. Hence Sondheim's melody lines work the way people do: they stammer, they hem and haw, they undercut themselves, they get assertive and then take it back, they repeat things neurotically for reassurance, they entertain second thoughts, and third ones. None of this makes Sondheim's numbers more hummable, but it makes them revealing and dramatic, and intricate enough to reward repeated listening.

And what sort of ultimate value is hummability anyway? It may have been vital to the musicals of the twenties, thirties, and early forties, and only slightly less so to those of the Rodgers-and-Hammerstein era, but now? Whistling a happy tune is all very well, but the Sondheim revolution has demonstrated that the musical can tackle much bigger things: it can explore history, psychology, fairy tale, myth, even epistemology; it can ask what art is. Sondheim's next project, which he's developing with James Lapine, will combine two one-act musicals, the first (based on the Ettore Scola movie "Passione d'Amore") about a dashing young man who falls in love with an ugly woman, and the second (based on Sam Fussell's book "Muscle") about body-building; Sondheim hopes that the result will be a meditation on physical beauty. His system could, theoretically, be applied to almost any subject. The trouble is, he has no heirs. The British and French composers whose work has proved so successful on Broadway—principally Andrew Lloyd Webber and Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schoenberg—are still essentially laboring within the Rodgers-and-Hammerstein model, using a musical language that has advanced very little since Puccini. And in a Broadway environment, where mounting a musical is almost prohibitively expensive, and perilously dependent on the approbation of a single newspaper, it's hard to imagine investors taking a flyer on anyone as daring as Sondheim—anyone, that is, except Sondheim himself. He has changed the musical forever, it appears, but he has left a lot of scorched earth behind him.

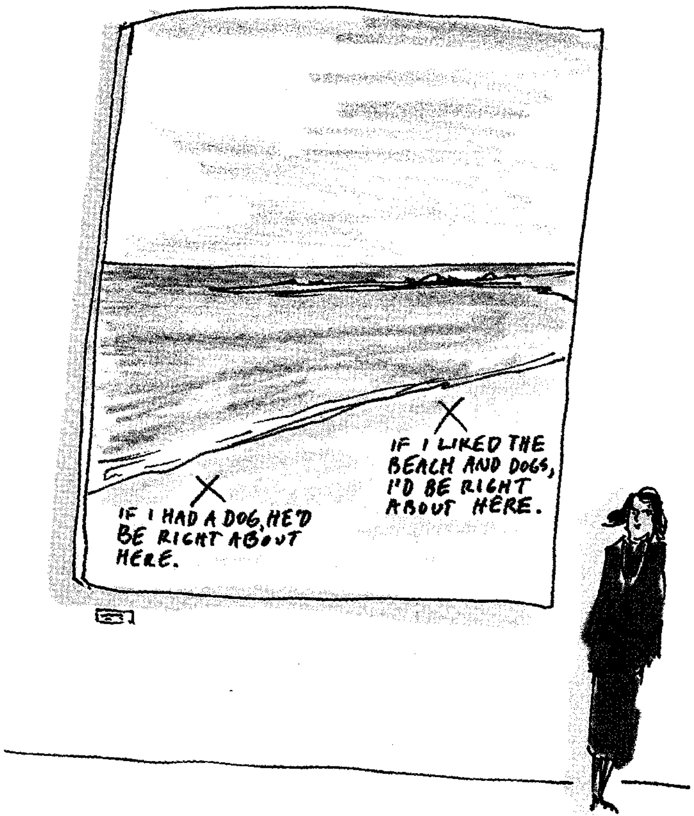
Sondheim is acutely aware of all this, as his intense involvement with the education of young playwrights demonstrates. On the other hand, in his heart of hearts he has never grasped the extent of his talent; something in him clings to the idea that anyone can do what he does. Like Georges Seurat, who chastised devotees for seeing "poetry in my work" and contended that he could formulate "scientific" principles that would consistently produce not only his celebrated subtleties of color but even specific emotional effects, Sondheim is the paradigm of the artist whose work comes more from the head than from the heart, more from method than from inspiration, more from calculus than from birdsong and wind. He does his job; when he's gone, others will do theirs.

But, if Sondheim cares deeply about the theatre's posterity, his own is another matter. "Hal Prince has been trying to get me to write an opera," he says. "But one problem with writing an opera is that you get so few performances. For Hal, having performances after you're dead means a lot. He thinks that posterity's great. I don't. I don't understand it. Once you're dead, you can't enjoy the audience enjoying it. So where's the pleasure? If you told me that the day I died nobody would ever play another note of mine, it really wouldn't bother me a lot. What you want is a response from an audience that's audible, or feelable, or tangible. I want that audience. I want them to come while I'm alive." ♦

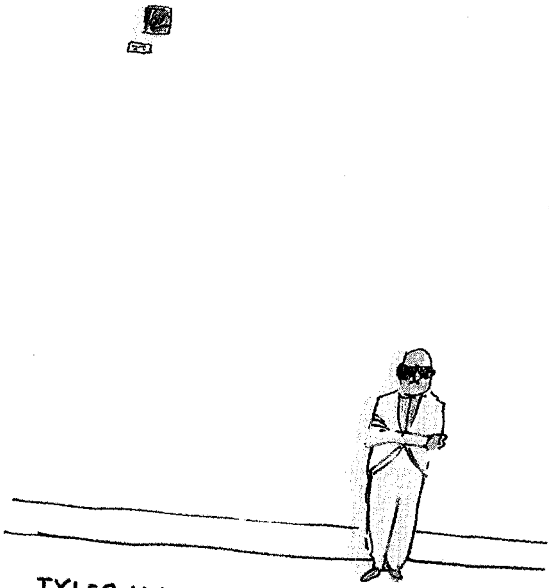
ARTIST'S SKETCHBOOK
BY MICHAEL CRAWFORD



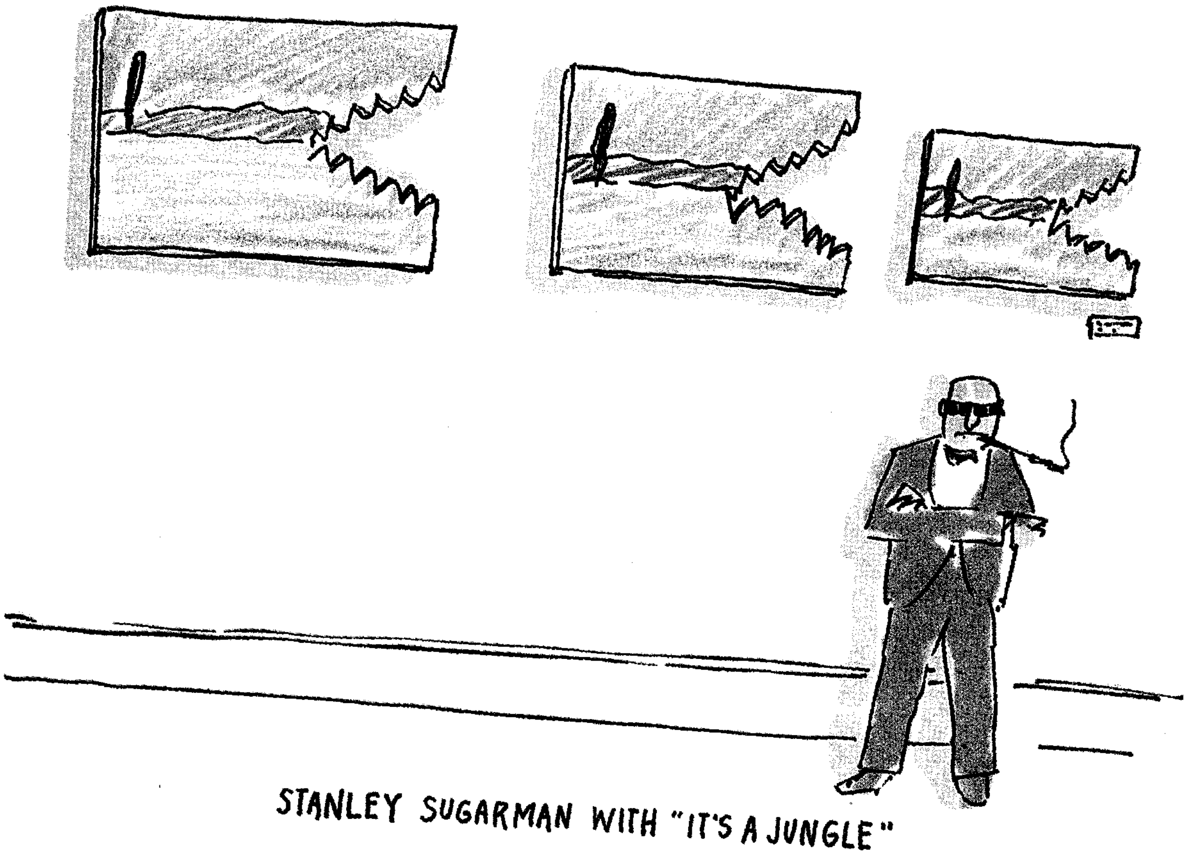
CYRIL BEEKS
WITH
"MIND MESSIN', No 7"


IF I HAD A DOG, HE'D BE RIGHT ABOUT HERE.
IF I LIKED THE BEACH AND DOGS, I'D BE RIGHT ABOUT HERE.

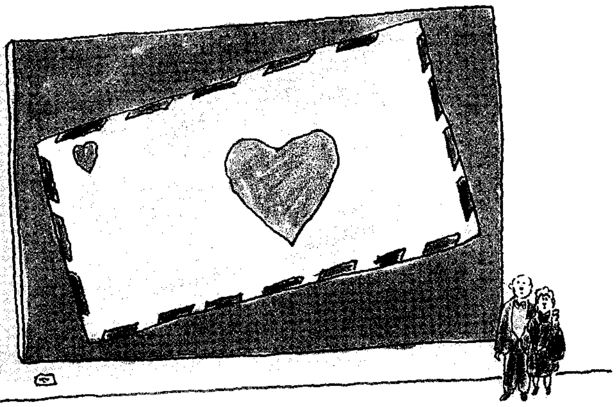
MARY LOU GAGGAS WITH "SIXTY-FIVE-HUNDRED-DOLLAR PAINTING"



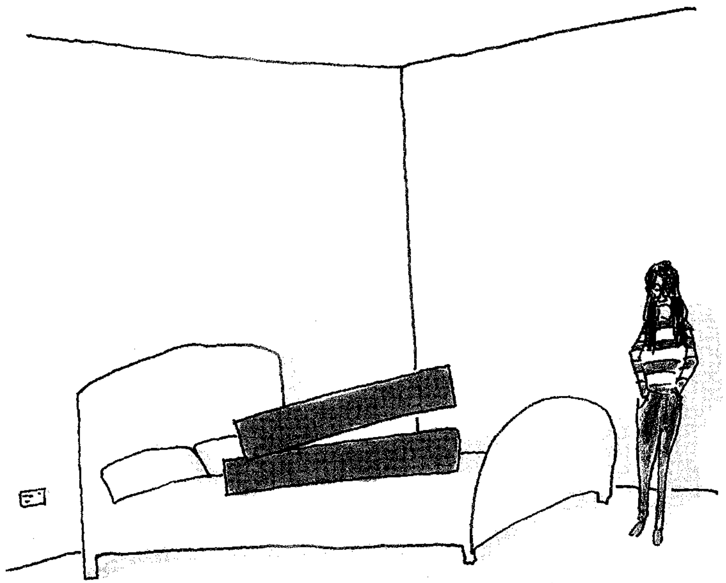
TYLER KNELF WITH "SELF-PORTRAIT"



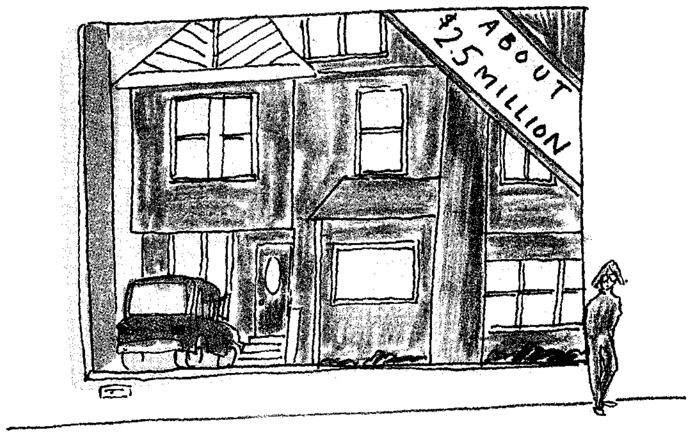
STANLEY SUGARMAN WITH "IT'S A JUNGLE"



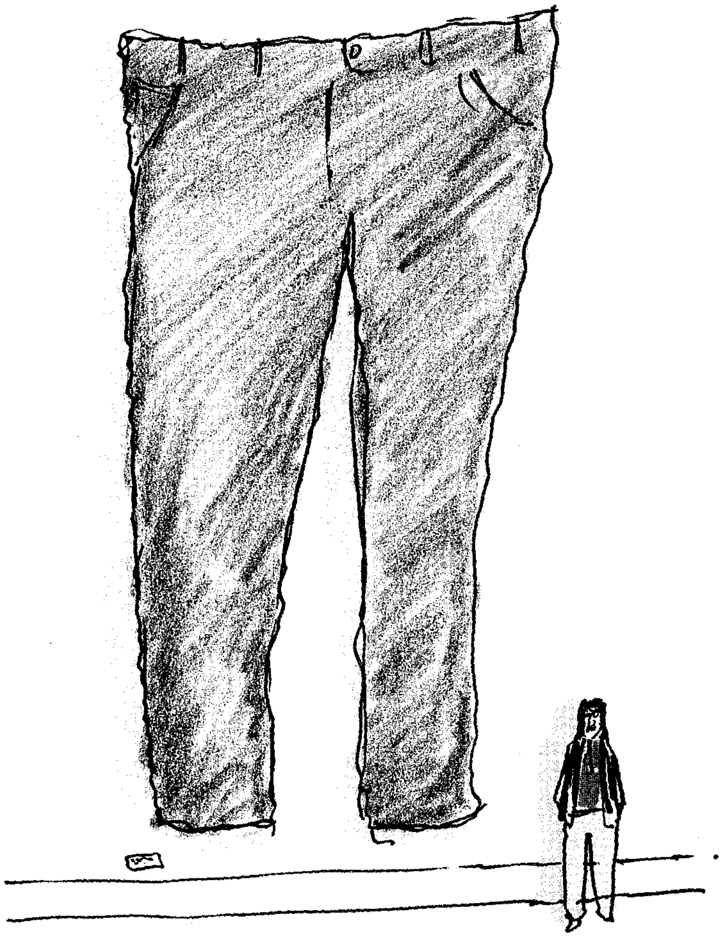
SALLY AND JEFF HILFINGER WITH "WHAT IT IS"



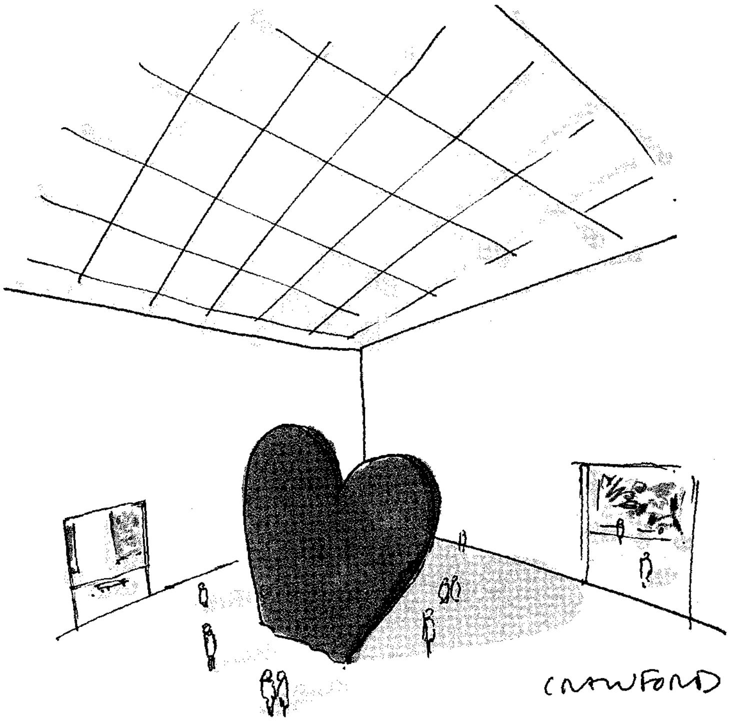
LOIS BRABHAM SCANT WITH HER "N.E.A.-APPROVED SEXUAL CONGRESS" INSTALLATION


ABOUT
$25 MILLION

DEIRDRE ONG-OISTER WITH "JACK'S ASPEN DIGS"



CZEWELISLAV SLISEWICZ WITH "THE DECLINE OF MAN"



ELLEN SWIM'S "GRAY MATTER" INSTALLATION

FICTION

WHAT I NEED

BY JONATHAN WILSON

“TELL me something, Sam,” said Morris Liverman, my father-in-law-to-be. “What would a guy like you make?”

“A guy like me,” I replied, “would make about the same as I do.”

We were sitting on my balcony at 3 Bezalel Street, Jerusalem, which is where I lived between the Yom Kippur War and Ariel Sharon’s adventure in Lebanon. “Don’t be a wise guy,” said Morris. “I don’t like wise guys.”

I was intrigued. I had never had a conversation with a two-fisted American in plaid pants and a pressed white shirt. According to Rosie, Morris had had a fistfight with her previous fiancé. “He swore at Daddy and Daddy punched him in the mouth.”

“Are both your parents Jewish?” Morris was asking.

“Yes,” I replied, “from cradle to grave.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“It means I live on my salary”—I taught in the local art school—“and what I can get for my work. My parents are dead. They left nothing.”

“Stone poor,” said Morris, sadly shaking his head, “and about to marry my daughter.”

I plucked a handful of olives from the high branches of the tree that overhung my terrace. They were small and hard, like the smooth pebbles I could feel rattling inside my head whenever the topic of money came up in my life. “These need soaking,” I announced, by way of changing the subject. “In brine.”

Morris gave me a weird look, then relented. “There used to be a store in London,” he said, “when I was stationed there during the war. Brooks’s, it was called. The shop floor was sprinkled with sawdust. They had a barrel full of sweet-and-sour pickles, and new green cucumbers. The sweet-and-sour were always too soft. I told Brooks. He threw me out of the store. Me. A young man in uniform. Can you imagine? But that was all long ago. The question today is: Why do you want to marry my daughter?”

I had to admit this was the question of questions. I took a deep breath, then I said, “Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned?” In the context of our conversation, or perhaps any conversation, it was a stupid thing to say.

“What’s that?” Morris asked. “A line? Are you feeding me a line, like ‘Is the Pope Jewish?’ ”

Luckily, at this moment Rosie came out to join us. Her hair was covered with tinfoil. “What are you doing,” asked her father, “roofing your head?”

“It’s to keep the heat in—it makes the color of the henna intensify,” Rose replied. She was one of those people who know that the best way to defuse an insulting question is to give a straight answer.

We sat and drank tea suffused with the mint flavor of *nana* leaves. The sun, well into its descent behind the adjacent apartments, was half an orange resting on a concrete block. “When my mother came from Russia,” Morris remarked, “she put a sugar lump in her mouth before she drank her tea. She drank the tea through the sugar. You see what I’m saying? My father, on the other hand, put half a slice of lemon in his tea. Do you know why? Because it reminded him of a sunset. Warmth. The shape of the lemon.”

I was bowled over by the arrival of poetry on my balcony in the form of Mr. Liverman’s anecdote. In appreciation, and wanting to contribute something of my own, I said, “Let me show you my cup sculpture.” I had glued a mug onto the encrusted lid of an old paint can, painted the piece black and green, and then scratched at it with a nail.

We went back into my apartment. The three of us squeezed into the area next to the kitchen which I wistfully referred to as “the studio.” Morris walked round the cup. “Yes,” he said finally, “very nice. But what I don’t understand about you is this: Why do you go on making things if you haven’t sold what you’ve already got? You have a room full of merchandise. If you don’t mind my saying so, you have overstock. I see a lot of sculptures here, a helluva lot. Have you thought of reducing the price? Sometimes in these situations a sale is not a bad idea. Lower the price. Empty your warehouse. Begin again.”

“Oh, Dad,” Rose interrupted, coming to my defense. “It doesn’t work like that. This is the creative process, not the fur business.”

“You know what this cup-saucer thing would be nice for?” asked Morris, brushing aside his daughter’s distinction with a wave of his hand. “Pens and pencils. On a desk.”

MORRIS was tired from his journey. He thought he’d take a nap before checking in at his hotel. I decided to go and visit Hannah, my ex-shrink, who happens to be a very beautiful woman. In those days she had long hair, almost down to her waist, and a face like Bianca Jagger’s. We were supposed to be in a post-therapy friends phase. This was hard, because I was used to letting myself go in her company, but now that I was no longer paying her, the expression of wild and excessive feelings was not permitted. I settled into a red brocaded armchair in her front room. (She wouldn’t let me near her office.) “Should I marry?” I asked.

“Well,” she replied, “far be it from me to interfere with your plans.”

“What are you talking about?” I said. “You’re my therapist.”

“Not anymore,” she cruelly reminded me.

I looked around the room. Her shelves were stuffed with books on death and dying. Outside, on Ramban Street, brakes squealed and the pneumatic doors of an Egged bus folded open and slammed shut. I rambled on for a while about my ambivalence and indecisiveness. Hannah listened intently, occasionally nodding her head. Then, all of a sudden, she rose from her seat. “You know," she said, "I have something for you. I meant to give it to you at our final session, but I forgot." She moved to a small glass cabinet and took out a scroll tied with pink ribbon. She held it out to me. Had I graduated? Was this a secret thing that everybody got at the end of therapy—a certificate: "You are slightly less neurotic than you were ten years ago"?

Out on the street, under a night sky dotted with pearly stars, I unrolled my award. It was a small reproduction of a painting by Oskar Kokoschka called "The Tempest." A man and a woman lay in what looked like a bed, storm-tossed on an ocean. The woman was asleep. The man didn't look too happy.

I thought I should walk home instead of taking the bus. ("You don't have a car?" Rosie's father had asked.) On the corner of Ussishkin a man in a leather apron and a green wool cap was selling flowers. As I passed, he held out a huge bunch of giant yellow chrysanthemums. He looked, for a moment, like the Statue of Liberty. I didn't stop. "What are you afraid of?" he yelled after me as I wandered up the road. "Bring a little light into your life."

Yes. Rosie was light, and I did love her—but marriage? Probably I had lived alone too long. I was nearly thirty-five. It was time to grow up. For my whole life, I had been playing around in clay. I stuck things together, then I pulled them apart. Then I put them back together in a different way. This was bad preparation for marriage. Or was it?

I decided to drop in on my friend Muni. I turned in through a trellised entranceway halfway up the street. Muni had constructed it to raise a grapevine. He had succeeded. After he was done, it turned out that the other families in his apartment building were opposed to grapes. They tore the vine down. The trellis stood as a monument to sweetness and its adversaries.

Muni and Ada's kitchen was in noisy motion: children wriggled around the room, plates spun, stacks of students' blue books blasted off from one table and crashed down on another. "Marry?" I yelled above the din. "Should I marry?" Ada and Muni may have begun to laugh, but who could tell? A cut knee was bandaged, goldfish were fed, a small dog got tangled in my feet and brought me to the ground. I lay supine while four cups of Wissotzky tea slid very fast from side to side on the edge of the kitchen table that was now my horizon.

"Of course you should marry." It was a woman's voice. "Misery loves company." I got up, brushed myself off, and left without anybody's noticing.

Outside, in front of the Ussishkin Laundromat, I got caught up in a small crowd pressing to get into the temple next door. I went in, too. I hadn't been inside a temple without a good reason (bar mitzvah, wedding, death) for a quarter of a century. Prayers were in progress; some serious bobbing and weaving was going on. Up and down, side to side. Tryouts, I thought—this place is a gym. Someone touched my arm and pointed to my bare head, which I quickly covered. Someone else thrust a book into my hands. I looked around at the sea of white shirts. It was Friday night. By now I should have been back with Rose and her father. But I wasn't ready. My neighbor, a short, bearded man with a lot of gray hair coming out of his ears, jabbed a finger at a place in my text. With the rest of the congregation, I repeated, "Come, my friend, to meet the bride; let us welcome the presence of the Sabbath."

After the service, I remained in my seat. A blast of warm air hosed down with jasmine came in through the open windows and mingled with the sweaty odor of the departing congregants. A tall old man with a large face and deep-set eyes slowly came toward me. His bald head and thick nose reminded me of a drawing I had once seen of Cro-Magnon man. "You're new," he said, and then he added, "American?"

"No," I replied. "English. But I've been here for years. I'm in exile from the world where art crosses paths with commerce."

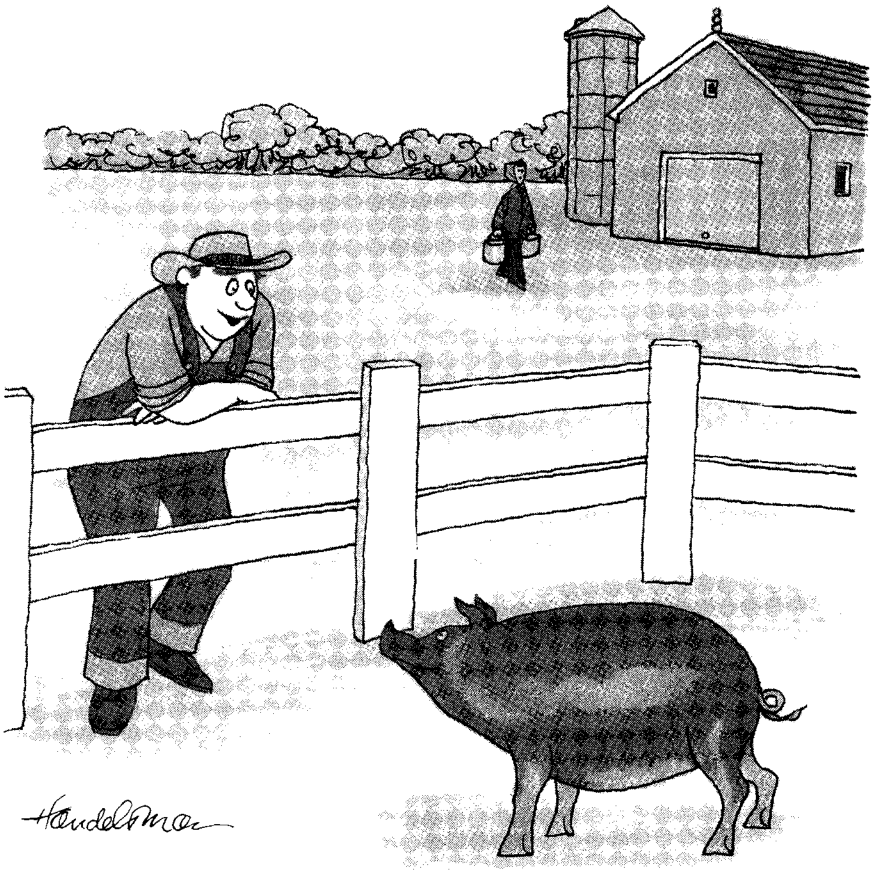
He looked at me very carefully, then asked, "So, apart from that, what's the problem?"

"Who said there was a problem?"

He didn't speak but drilled his prehistoric fingers on the vinyl-covered seat next to mine. So far this was better than therapy, better than friends.

"The truth is I'm thinking of getting married."

There was a long silence. I waited for



"Saw you on 'Larry King Live' last night. I liked the way you came right out and admitted you were a pig."

his ancient wisdom to percolate. Finally, he said, "Don't be a schmuck. It's groans on groans." Then he rose and walked out of the temple.

That's it, I thought, That's enough. Fuck them all. I'm going to get married. I went back to the Statue of Liberty and bought his flaming torch. I walked home through the neighborhood of Nahalat, past its tiny, makeshift houses that looked as if they had been thrown together from sheets, towels, and cardboard. Each flimsy construction, I was sure, housed a perfectly contented married couple. Right now they were all sharing harmonious Friday-night meals; candles burned on their dinner tables and love in their hearts. Here was an entire neighborhood of individuals slow to anger and easy to pacify.

WET AUTUMN NIGHT

Where are the firemen rushing in the rain?
Like a washed-up poet, will their siren blaze
capsize to damp fizzle? An Arab
fruit stand is backlit like Marlene Dietrich;
mango eyes follow us, as in a Renaissance
vanity. Ancient furies lean
on doorframes, hard as prostitutes,
their scarred mouths dubbed with fire-shrieks,
for they know that life, like rain,
evaporates. Down the cobbled street
ignore the stares from under canopies
of bars: umbrella envy—it, too, shall pass.

—BENJAMIN IVRY

BACK in my apartment, Morris was standing alone staring out of the window at the city skyline. Rosie was nowhere to be seen. "Here's a mystery," said Morris. "You go in the bathroom. You do your business. You smell nothing. You come out. For some reason—maybe you forgot to brush your teeth or you left your watch on the sink—you go back in. A terrible smell! Who can explain a thing like that? It's like you're two people. The one who's been in there, and the one who goes back in. Now, if you go in right after someone else has been in there, a different story—a smell right away."

What could I say? There are moments in life when we see very clearly. Morris had been granted such a moment. He had been delivered a truth, and in his generosity he had passed it on to me. In return I offered him my chrysanthemum torch. Morris, turning from the window, took the flowers, then looked me straight in the eyes. "Can I ask you a favor?" he said. "Live together. Try an experiment. In my opinion, Rose is too young to get married. She's on her junior year abroad."

"No," I replied, "that was six years ago. She lives here now. She doesn't even go to school anymore. She's a botanist with the Nature Reserve Authority."

"Time flies," said Morris, sitting down at my kitchen table. "One minute a bat mitzvah, the next, your daughter's making a tent out of the sheets with a thirty-five-year-old unemployed man."

I let this slide. "We've been living together for a year and a half," I said.

"Look," Morris continued firmly, "when Rose's mother was alive, I was harsh. I wanted to have everything my way. Then Tessie got sick, very sick. What could I do about it? You can't force your will on nature. Sometimes you can bend it, like your Uri Geller can bend a spoon, but most of the time not. So what I'm saying to you is this: Rent a bigger apartment. I'll pay the extra cost. Live with Rose in a less cramped environment. If you're happy after a year, get married. If not, strike out in separate directions. You take the high road, and she takes the low, or vice versa."

He hadn't heard a word I'd said. But never mind—his apartment idea was a good one. We did need more space. I didn't think I could take the money (I had *some* pride), but I could accept the proposal. Rose came banging up the stairs, her arms loaded down with groceries. The henna had given her hair a copper tinge. "Nice helmet you're wearing," said her father. "Where's your shield and lance?" Rose dumped the bags down on the kitchen table. A kohlrabi and two tomatoes spilled out and rolled onto the floor.

"Guess what?" I said. "We're moving. It's your father's idea."

"Great," Rose replied. "Nice of you two to make plans on my behalf." She picked up the vegetables, washed them, and began to slice the kohlrabi. "Try some of this, Dad." She held a piece out to her father. "It's just like a radish, only not so sharp."

Morris made a face. "Your mother loved radishes. It's an acquired taste."

"Radishes are a basic vegetable," Rose said. "There's nothing sophisticated about them."

When we were done with supper, Rose made an announcement. "I have to go to Tel Aviv. I'll be away for five or six days. If you want to find us a bigger apartment, that's fine with me, but you and Daddy will have to do it on your own."

Later, after Morris had gone back to his hotel and Rose and I were in bed, I asked, "Why are you going away?"

"That's my business," she said. She didn't say it in a nasty way, but, even so, I felt as if someone had jabbed me in the chest with a sharp object. "If you're going to marry me," she went on, "you'll have to get used to my behavior. You're a middle-aged man with a young girl." She started to laugh. There's a time to laugh and a time to weep, I thought, as Rose climbed on top of me to get a better view of my face.

SO Morris and I wandered the cheap but trendy neighborhoods of Jerusalem. We roamed the narrow streets down by the railway tracks in Bak'a, where a garden of junk, a sculptor's delight, had grown up in the space between the fence and the road. I scavenged in this metal graveyard, sorting through the discarded cans, auto parts, refrigerator doors, and broken boilers, while Morris stood beside me and pondered the apartments we had just visited. "A top floor, with no proper roof gutters—a winter nightmare!" "I'm not sure I like the idea of a shared roof garden. Could be trouble." And "That place we just saw, in my opinion, and never having lived in Israel, you understand, was a slum." He was generally right, and I appreciated his input. Forty years in the fur business hones certain skills. Morris was direct in his questioning of landlords, deft in his approach to financial matters, alert to rip-offs.

On the fourth day of our search (and of Rosie's absence; no phone calls, no nothing) after a depressing visit to a dingy basement owned by a crabby old woman who kept chickens in her yard ("Picturesque, but not a place to live" — Morris Liverman), I was about ready to give up. Morris was more sanguine. "When you look for property you can't rush things. Meanwhile, there are intrusions of beauty."

"What?" I said.

"Look," he replied, gesturing toward the railway. "Poppies." He walked over to the embankment and I followed. We stood ankle-deep in a thin, straggly line of wild, blood-red flowers. They didn't look like poppies to me, but I couldn't say what they were. Morris started to whistle a little tune to himself, then fell silent.

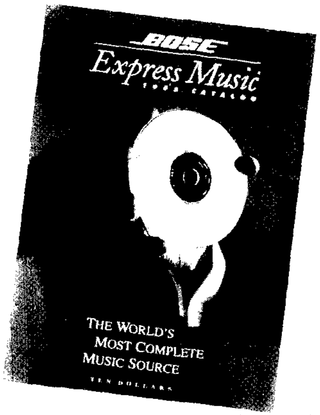
"There was a time when you could take the train that passed here all the way to Egypt," I said, and as I spoke I had a vision of Rose speeding through the desert on the Cairo express, locked in the arms (and legs!) of some young British officer who knew the names of all the flowers.

"Yes," Morris said, "that was before."

"They ripped up the rails in the Sinai," I continued, by way of getting Rose off track, "to make the Bar-Lev Line."

"Really?" said Morris, and now he began to whistle in earnest. "Know what that was?" he asked, pausing for breath. "'We're Going to Hang Out the Washing on the Siegfried Line.'"

As if we had both decided to free-associate simultaneously, we looked up together toward a line of laundry stretched from the corner of a stone house to a gatepost. Three athletic-style brassieres and two pairs of white tights moved gently in the breeze. From our



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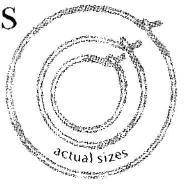

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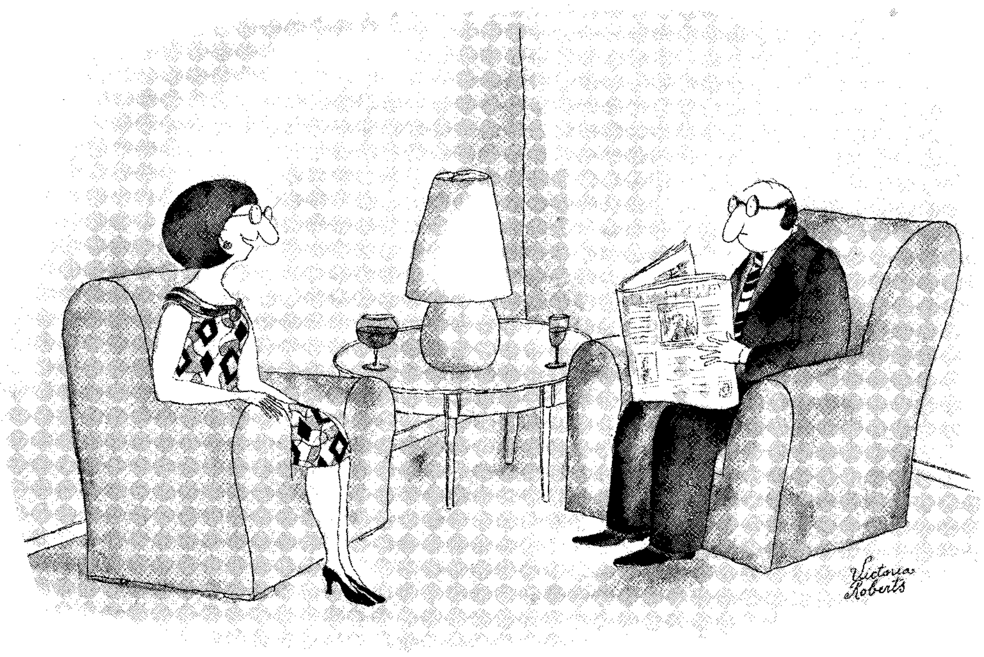

"I just sold your air rights."

• •

elevated position at the side of the tracks we could see, written in Hebrew and English, a large, hand-painted "For Rent" sign in one of the upper windows of the house.

"This is a meshugeneh place," whispered Morris almost as soon as we had crossed the threshold. The owner, a slight but muscular blonde with a very pretty face (maybe I really *shouldn't* get married, I thought), showed us around and filled us in on the history of the house. Once, she told us, it had been owned by a Turkish pasha. He had built the place to keep his unmarried daughters in purdah—there were still bars on the windows. Naomi, the present incumbent, was an acrobat. She was off to spend two years in Europe.

Near where Morris was standing, a trapeze hung from the ceiling. You could grab it from halfway up the stairs and swing across the room to a landing spot in a window alcove. "I'll take it," I said to Naomi. "High ceilings, a big work space—it's what I need."

"You want to live in a prison for virgins?" Morris whispered in my ear. "You think Rose will appreciate this?"

"Oh," I said, remembering that there was a Rose. "She'll love it."

I HAVE always hated moving—my muscles tense up, my nerves fray. Rose's disappearance only made things worse. I was about halfway through packing our stuff—in fact, I was bending to put Rose's diaphragm in the "bathroom box" (was I glad or distressed that she didn't have it with her?)—when I pulled my back out. Agony. It took me five minutes to straighten up; then I discovered that I couldn't bend forward more than an inch.

I called friends. As soon as I said "packing," everyone was on reserve duty, or going to an important meeting in Haifa, or picking up a relative at the airport. Even Muni and Ada were unavailable—they had two sick kids, and their car had broken down. "I don't need a car," I said. "Morris loaned me his rental—he told me he'd sit by the pool for a day or two."

"Oh, Sam," said Ada, "hire a schlepper. But not one of the Jewish ones. They're all *gruzinim*—they cheat you. Go to the Old City."

At midday, under a hot September sun, I approached the shadow of Jaffa Gate. A bunch of kids flew by and glued themselves onto a circle of tourists. They offered postcards, tours of the city, sesame bagels, speckled eggs, reedy flutes, drums the size of castanets. I circled the crowd and made for the low wall in front of the Citadel. There I found Ahmed. He was wearing the uniform that had been described to me by Ada: a poncho fashioned out of a length of carpet, and a cummerbund of ropes. I explained my situation. "You need a truck?" he asked. "My son has."

"No," I told him. "I need you." My heart was sinking. Ahmed was sixty if he was a day. He was skinny—Giacometti skinny. At a push, I could think of him as "wiry."

"This is what I do," said Ahmed. He bent forward, almost double, and showed me how he used the small of his back as a pivot. "A piano, downstairs, no problem."

Oh, God, I thought, bringing to mind a poster slapped up all over town: it showed an old Arab man bent double under the weight of a huge sack, and inside the sack was the domed city of Jerusalem. "Perhaps we shouldn't do this," I said. "I have a lot of heavy things—many books, weird things, sculptures."

Ahmed looked hard at me, trying to figure out what kind of creature I might be. "Let's go," he said. I nodded agreement.

Ahmed labored up and down stairs, his back piled high with boxes. When we hit the street to load up the car I would wince and hold my back, in order to let passersby know that I was incapacitated. Once, shamefully, I affected a limp. As he worked, Ahmed told me about his good daughter at home in Beit Jala and his uncontrollable daughter in America. Her name was Yasmin, and she had run away to New York with a boy from their village. Now she was working in a Manhattan hospital as a medical orderly. The boyfriend was sweeping floors. They wanted to be doctors. Ahmed seemed quite proud of his daughter's rebelliousness.

I told Ahmed about Rose. "She's intelligent, she's beautiful, she's fun to be with, the joints of her thighs are like jewels (this last was an unspoken thought), and I'm going to marry her when she gets back." Ahmed closed his eyes, as if to say, "When they go, they don't return."

After an hour, I said, "O.K., let's break. You look like you need a drink."

Ahmed said, "Ramadan," and started to pick up more boxes. "I'll drink at sunset," he added.

I sat down on a carton of Rosie's clothes. The narrow strap of one of her nightdresses hung forlornly over the side. I looked at Ahmed; his thin face glistened, and sweat had gathered in the creases of his forehead and was trickling in small rivulets toward the matted reservoirs of his silver eyebrows. "There is no choice," he went on. "I must work, and I must be observant."

"You must stop," I said, trying to sound insistent. "You can't fast when human life is threatened—it's in the Koran." This was a wild grope, and we both knew it. Ahmed refused to pay any attention. He heaved my drawing table up onto his back and wobbled toward the stairs.

Now I was caught. I wasn't new to guilt—it was one of the food groups in my family—but this was a special pleasure. Idea for a movie: a scrawny old Arab guy who isn't permitted to eat or drink in the daytime hours has to move the belongings of a strong, well-fed, youngish Jewish sculptor from one part of Jerusalem to another. The y.J.s., while he is sympathetic to the old man's predicament, recognizes that he cannot tell him to stop, because (1) the old man wants to work and needs the money, and (2) it's not right to mess around with other people's gods. Later, the y.J.s.'s girlfriend returns from Tel Aviv; she is appalled by the whole episode; she leaves.

While I was trying to figure out how to proceed, the phone rang. I had sunk deep into Rosie's clothes and had to rock myself forward to get out of the box. Underwear and overwear tumbled to the floor. When I picked up the receiver, I had a black dress strapped to my leg.

"Samuel?" Rosie's voice sounded very far away. "I wanted to let you know I'm at Megged's."

Megged! I knew this guy. He worked with Rose, taking groups on trips into the Negev and showing them the flora and fauna. He was a handsome bastard. We had once spent an evening at his little Tel Aviv apartment listening to an endless loop of birdsong tapes.

"What are you doing there?"

"We went out together to see Sternbergia. Megged cried."

"Sternberger?" I had known a Ronnie Sternberger at school. I'd heard that he had made a fortune in wastepaper baskets. But why was he in Israel? And how could he make Megged cry?

"Not Sternberger, you idiot," Rose was saying, "Stern*bergia*—the plant. We drove up to the Galilee. You should have been there." Yes, I thought, I should have. "There was an entire field. We had to go—it was our one chance before the rains came. Megged said it looked like a carpet of yellow. Is my father with you?"

"No," I replied. "Ahmed is."

"Who's Ahmed?"

"He's a friend." (I could form attachments in her absence, too.) "By the way, we have a place, on Harakevet Street, No. 23. It's a former gynaeceum. We're moving today."

"That's great," Rose said, but I could tell she'd already stopped listening; something was distracting her, probably the discrete cry of the redwing. "Look after Dad," she continued. "He's lonely. I'll be back."

I hung up. Ahmed was nowhere to be seen. I found him at the bottom of the stairs. He was staring at a few pieces of broken skull that he had in his hands. He was panting heavily. "It's O.K.," I said. "It's a bust I did in art school. It doesn't mean anything."

WE drove over to the new house and unloaded. I told Ahmed that I'd give him money for two full days if he stopped now and finished the rest tomorrow. I offered to pay him for the work he'd already done. He got insulted and gave me a short lecture on trust, honesty, and faith. "O.K.," I said. "See you tomorrow."

It was now late afternoon. The light over the railway tracks had taken on an ochre tinge that lent an antique richness to the trees and dusky air. I walked stiffly into my new home. Naomi had removed her trapeze, but the heavy circle hooks remained in the ceiling. With my foot I unrolled our double futon. It was still indented with two shapes that, in the middle, merged into one. I lay down gingerly, on Rosie's side of the futon. I was in trouble, physically and emotionally—not big trouble, to be sure, but trouble nevertheless. It is what we are born to; it springs out of the ground and jumps on us. We can't shake it.

I hated taking siestas, especially late ones, but I slept anyway. When I woke, my back had stiffened so completely that I had to roll off the futon in order to get up. I crawled to the bathroom, ran water

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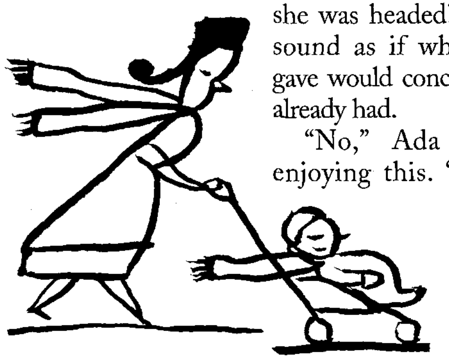
from a kneeling position, half stood, then fell into the bath like an equipment-laden deep-sea diver tumbling backward off a boat into the ocean. After soaking myself for an hour I was still in pain. There was a pharmacy downtown which stayed open late. I could have taken a bus, but I walked, hoping that the exercise and warm night air would combine to loosen me up.

In order to confound Rose and Megged, I walked through the prettiest streets I knew. I tried to pay close attention to the constituents of the natural world that were available to me on this cloudy, moonless night. You see, Rose and I had had this nature problem for a while. "You love junk," she had said to me back in the summer, during one of our evening rambles around town. "You don't see flowers, only the junk that's crushing them." She had knelt in a wild border, and tried to point out some flat yellow blooms—"These are evening primroses, they open at sunset to attract the night insects"—but I had been taken by a megaphone-shaped piece of metal that someone had dumped on top of them. Rose got irate. "You know who still cares about nature?" she said. "Sunday painters. The rest of you, all you 'serious artists,' are holed up in factories decorating your 'spaces' with junk."



"We're making something beautiful out of the detritus of the late twentieth century," I responded. "And you know what? That cylinder could easily be transformed into a flower. It, too, has a shape and color. Moreover, on another level, we are what we discard. I'm holding a mirror up to garbage."

Rose snorted. The truth was I knew exactly what she was saying. I paid lip service to nature. For example, I loved the names of the specimens she brought home to classify—purple bugloss, star thistle, blue lotus—but I had long ago stopped looking at the flowers. Why? Too much Rauschenberg?

When I turned on to Balfour Street I lost track of these art thoughts. A crowd had gathered, as usual, in front of the Prime Minister's house. Men and women, mostly young, huddled behind a police barrier. They held flashlights and lanterns and stood in silence under a large sign, like a scoreboard, that had been erected behind them. White letters chalked on a black background announced the number of the Lebanon war dead. Begin's house was floodlit but shuttered. He was said to be depressed. A great weight had sunk from his brain down into his heart and anchored there.

A voice called out to me from the crowd. It was Ada. "Sam," she said. "Your girlfriend was just here."

"Rose?"

"Do you have other girlfriends?"

"That's impossible," I said. "I spoke to her a couple of hours ago—she's in Tel Aviv."

"Not anymore."

It was true that the drive from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem took only forty minutes, so there was no reason Rose couldn't be back. If, that is, she had been in Tel Aviv in the first place. "Did she say where she was headed?" I asked, trying to sound as if whatever answer Ada gave would concur with knowledge I already had.

"No," Ada replied—she was enjoying this. "Don't you know?"

I picked up my pills and got in a cab. Which home should I go to? The one with the bed seemed more sensible, but maybe Rose was at the other. After all, she had a key only to our old apartment. I went to Bezalel Street and told the cabbie to wait. No Rose. I looked around the half-empty apartment for a while, as if she might materialize out of the shadows, but if she was there she chose to remain discarnate.

My driver, Natan Meshoulam, whose water-buffalo shoulders took up half the front seat, fiddled with the radio dial. When the news came on, he listened carefully, then announced, "We finish them good. No more rockets." Then he found a music station he liked and, in a deep, guttural voice, joined in with the song on the radio. "Sleep-sliding avay," he sang. "Know ze nerrer to destination more you sleep-sliding avay."

IN the early morning Morris and Ahmed showed up at the same time. I wanted to say, "Hey, you both have uncontrollable daughters," but I didn't. Even without my pressing on them what they had in common, they seemed to get along. Morris was particularly interested in the sheepskin vest that Ahmed was wearing. With Ahmed's permission he felt it, stuck his nose in the wool, and then, astonishingly, tried it on. "Let me ask you something," said Morris, pulling the material together at the front to cover his shirt and tie. "What would a vest like this cost?"

"You tell me," Ahmed said. "Guess."

Oh, this was a delight—two cagey guys, neither giving an inch. Morris named a price. "Higher," said Ahmed. Morris tried again. "Lower," Ahmed responded. This might have gone on all morning if I hadn't intervened.

While Ahmed carried the rest of the heavy boxes downstairs, Morris moved the delicate pieces. I didn't even bother to hold my back. I had the oldest moving company in the world. I was beyond embarrassment. "Let me tell you about fur," said Morris as he and Ahmed packed the car. "You know what happens on the streets of America? They spit. They spit at women in fur. Fur! That clothed us when we were naked. That kept us warm in the Ice Age. To wear fur is a human thing. It's in our nature." Soon, they moved on to skinning—Ahmed had witnessed his father do a few goats—and from there to tanning. Daughters, I wanted to say—please talk about daughters. I need to understand. Or wives—at least wives. But it was not to be.

Morris said he would drive Ahmed back to the Old City. I gave Morris money and asked him to haggle over the final price. His eyes lit up. I told Ahmed my girlfriend's father would be paying him. He looked at me as if to say, "Too cowardly to do your own bargaining," but I was in no mood for the thrust and counterthrust of financial debate. By lunchtime, I was alone in the house by the railway tracks, standing rigid among my worldly possessions, lonely as the pasha's daughters.

FOUR days later Rose came in through the door while I was having breakfast. I was so happy and surprised that I didn't even say, "Where have you been?" Instead, as the sun streamed in with her, the fresh scents of morning carried through on the breeze, I said, "Want to walk?"

I thought I'd forgive her. I supposed she was allowed her last-minute jitters. After all, I'd had them. However, by the time we reached Abu Tor (we were heading for the Old City) Rose had already put *me* on the spot. "I can't believe it," she began. "You've been going around town asking everybody if you should marry me. Do you realize how humiliating that is?"

I was nonplussed. "How do you know that?" I asked, which was a mistake—I should have gone for flat denial.

"First, your shrink has a mouth the size of the Grand Canyon. Second, your friends can't be trusted. Third, this city is a village. You know that. You wake up in the morning and the neighbors know how you are before you do."

"O.K.," I said. "It was foolish of me. I admit it. But it helped me to hear what I already knew. I'm in love with you. I want to marry you."

Rosie was silent. We passed a cinémathèque where an Eric Rohmer film festival was playing. Then we crossed the Sultan's Pool and headed uphill. "There's something else," she said. "Megged. He understands something about me that you don't."

I nearly said "Is this a pollination issue?" but I stopped myself. Megged. That flowery fuck. How did he get to be so deep and understanding? Of course, Rosie couldn't put into words what it was Megged had grasped about her. She had a feeling, that was all.

I had known for a long time that where love is concerned, feelings can't be fought with reason, so I decided to beg and plead. By this time we had reached Jaffa Gate. I was saying something that had no chance of being persuasive—"Your father thinks we should live together for a year"—when I caught sight of Ahmed out of the corner of my eye. He was standing watching two men play backgammon. I called his name across the square. When he looked up I gestured toward Rosie as if to say, "See, she did come back." Ahmed looked right through me (Morris must have skinned him terribly in the bargaining), then he turned toward the wall, where he had laid down his equipment, and began to unwind his ropes. A sharp shaft of sunlight pierced Jaffa Gate, like a diamond-cutter's knife, and cut me off from Rose. ♦

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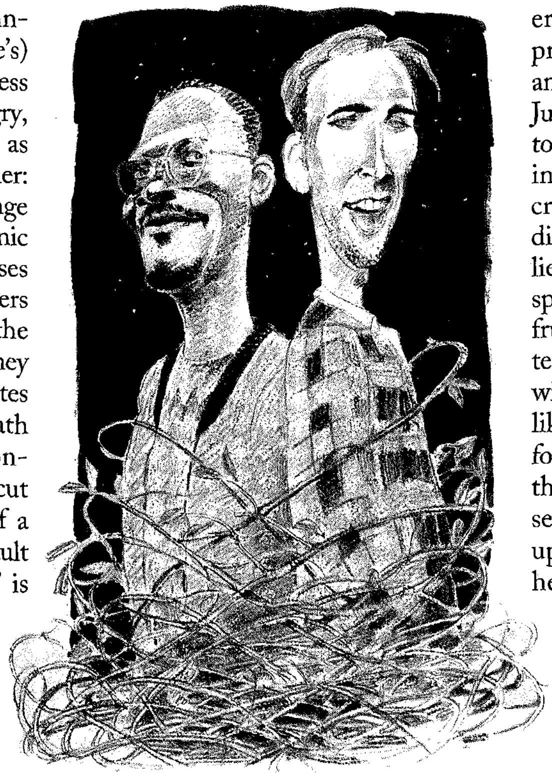
THE CRITICS

THE CURRENT CINEMA

SLOW BURN

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

IN "Falling Down," Michael Douglas plays a laid-off defense-industry worker who walks away from his car in the middle of a freeway traffic jam and blazes a trail, on foot, through the mean streets of Los Angeles. The director, Joel Schumacher, and the screenwriter, Ebbe Roe Smith, present the city as an obstacle course, designed to frustrate even the most basic needs and desires of its middle-class citizens; and Andrzej Bartkowiak's nauseous yellow-and-brown-toned cinematography intensifies the movie's (and the audience's) foul mood. The hero (who is nameless for most of the picture) starts out angry, and everything that happens to him as the day wears on just makes him angrier: a Korean grocer won't give him change for a phone call; members of a Hispanic gang attempt to mug him as he passes through their territory; when he orders breakfast at a fast-food restaurant, the employees smugly inform him that they stopped serving breakfast three minutes earlier; at one point, he finds his path blocked by a make-work street-construction project; later, he tries to cut across the wide, peaceful grounds of a country club and outraged golfers assault him. The conceit of "Falling Down" is that American society is rigged against the average guy, and the movie means to entertain us with the spectacle of Joe Normal's revenge on his enemies—that is, on both those who are beneath him and those who are above him on the class scale. The hero arms himself as he goes—first with a baseball bat wrestled away from the Korean grocer, and later with artillery abandoned by gang members—and everyone who crosses him winds up paying a price. The filmmakers acknowledge that their hero is deranged, but they're careful never to make him too repellent. The picture plays, shamelessly, to the audience's visceral satisfaction at seeing life's little irritations resolved swiftly and violently and, at the same time, strives to evoke an easy kind of pity for the Douglas character; he's a failure-of-the-American-dream symbol, and we're supposed to get misty-eyed about the disappointments that have turned a contented family man into a rabid lone-wolf avenger.



Color bind: Samuel L. Jackson and Nicolas Cage in "Amos & Andrew."

"Falling Down" is a wolf in sheep's clothing: a crude vigilante picture disguised as social satire. The press materials are filled with high-minded statements of purpose by the filmmakers and the cast. Douglas speaks piously about the "loss of our middle class." Schumacher expounds on the "general sense of division between those with privilege and those without—what seems to give people today a general sense of having been cheated or shortchanged." And one of the producers, Arnold Kopelson (whose past projects include "Platoon," "Porky's," and the Steven Seagal vehicle "Out for Justice"), contributes this deep thought to the symposium: "With the economy in disarray, massive unemployment, crime on the increase, and general discontent with living conditions, I believe the moviegoing audience will respond to [Douglas's character] and his frustrations and experiences with contemporary life, yet appreciate the irony with which they are presented." Movies like "Falling Down," which was made for thirty million dollars, do not recoup their costs by appealing to the public's sense of irony. If the audience, caught up in the excitement of watching the hero beat on an Asian shopkeeper or induce a heart attack in a country-club fat cat, were to miss the picture's subtle satiric content, the filmmakers would, I suspect, be able to live with it.

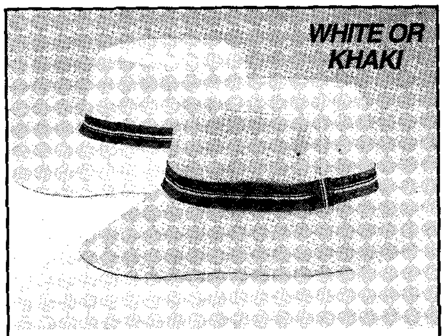
In its way, the movie is cunningly constructed. The screenplay keeps inventing awful situations for the ero to react to, and Schumacher gives ach of them the sort of slow-burn dranatic buildup that demands violent caharsis; between bursts of crowd-pleasng mayhem, the movie doles out the its of information that will ultimately olve the mystery of the hero's identity nd explain his anger. As he gets crazier, e gets more poignant. In a climactic onfrontation with the police officer lobert Duvall) who has tracked him lown, Douglas, now defeated and pahetic, asks incredulously, "I'm the bad ? How did that happen?" A few secnds later, he's floating among the deris under a pier, and the film's final imge is a flashback—in the form of a ome video playing to an empty living oom—of the hero, his wife, and his aughter in happier times. This ending, hich encourages us to see the Douglas haracter (and, by extension, all the anxous and frazzled members of the white niddle class in the audience) as a vicim of a ruthlessly impersonal social tructure, evokes the self-pitying "silent najority" rhetoric of the Nixon era: that ppalling sentimentality about one's wn beleaguered and underappreciated irtue.

It's no small feat to turn a sociopath nto a martyr, but the people who made Falling Down" are up to the challenge. or all the ferocity of the hero's ramage, he doesn't really do anything that e picture's target audience is likely to onsider unforgivable. His actions const mostly of yelling and threatening, on-fatal beatings, and picturesque deruction of property. He commits only ne murder, and its victim is the most dious character in the movie—a sexist, omophobic Nazi skinhead (Frederic orrest). And nothing in the movie funamentally contradicts the main aracter's don't-mess-with-me ethos. rendergast, the cop, at first seems to present an alternative to the intolerant d rigidly humorless Douglas character. endergast is a middle-aged middleass white guy who isn't overwhelmed y the pressures of the city, his job, and is extremely demanding marriage; and uvall's performance, which is loose and kable, provides a welcome contrast to e monotonous intensity of Douglas's. ut by the end of the picture the temeramental difference between the two en has been substantially reduced. rendergast, who is considered a little wimpy by some of his colleagues, because he rarely leaves his desk and is too solicitous of his shrewish, menopausal wife (Tuesday Weld, floundering in a cruelly conceived role), ultimately sheds his nice-guy reasonableness and starts to act more like an action-movie stud: he tells his wife to shut up and have a hot dinner waiting for him when he gets home, then hits the streets and blows away his adversary. He caps this string of kick-butt triumphs by saying "Fuck you," on live TV, to his mealy-mouthed captain. Prendergast is, like everything else in the movie, a rhetorical trick, a walking code word: his demeanor says "kinder, gentler," but the audience sees right through that—as it's meant to.

In "Falling Down" Schumacher and Smith give the audience exactly what they imagine it wants: not cold irony but a big hot dinner of violent wish-fulfillment fantasies. For true irony, we'll have to wait for a production documentary, in which we might see the huge, expensive film crew on location in the streets of L.A., tying up traffic and making people late for work, so that a few months later they'll be able to go to the movies and experience this great cathartic release of their impotent rage. But the ultimate irony will probably never happen: an audience that really took the message of "Falling Down" to heart would rise up as one and burn the multiplex to the ground.

E. MAX FRYE'S comedy "Amos & Andrew" flirts with explosive subjects like race and class, and at its climax a nice chunk of private property goes up in flames, but the movie has an oddly cozy, companionable tone. Frye, a screenwriter who is directing for the first time, doesn't do justice to the satiric possibilities of his own script; he directs a wild, ingenious farce plot very cautiously and deliberately, as if he were afraid of losing control of the story's meanings.

The picture begins with the arrival on a New England resort island (much like Martha's Vineyard) of a scholarly black man named Andrew Sterling (Samuel L. Jackson). After dark, he pulls up to a lovely, secluded house and begins to unpack his shiny BMW. Phil and Judy Gillman (Michael Lerner and Margaret Colin), out walking their dog, peer



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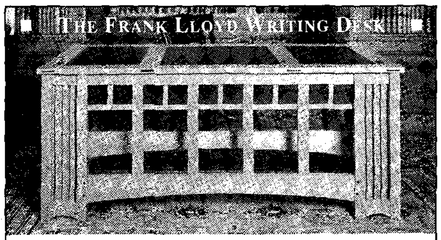

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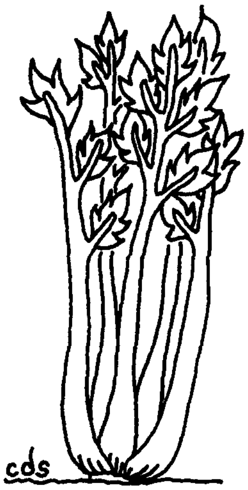
through the window and see Andrew *setting up his stereo—or, rather, they see* a black man with his hands on a valuable piece of electronic equipment, and *for them the only* possible interpretation is that there's a burglary in progress. These responsible citizens call the cops, who surround the house and then open fire on its unlucky new occupant. The situation becomes yet more complicated when the police chief (Dabney Coleman), who has political ambitions, discovers that the man his zealous deputies have been shooting at is not only the owner of the house but also a celebrity: Andrew is a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and a highly visible spokesman for black causes. Sensing political disaster, the chief concocts what he thinks is an inspired plan to save face. He's holding a harmless young drifter and occasional petty criminal named Amos (Nicolas Cage) in the town jail, and he offers the prisoner an unusual deal. Amos is to take Andrew hostage and then surrender immediately to the chief; after the charade has been played out, the minor charge pending against Amos will be dropped, and he'll be quietly released from jail. The chief will be able to tell Andrew that the earlier shooting incident was a regrettable but understandable (and certainly not racist) case of mistaken identity. No one need ever know what really happened; the Gillmans, who consider themselves liberal, aren't about to blow the whistle on the coverup.



Things do not, of course, go according to plan. Once the media show up, in force, the chief loses his grip on the simple scenario he has devised and welshes on his deal with Amos, and everyone starts to improvise. Cage takes over the movie—snatches it clean away from Jackson, Coleman, and the rest of the large and gifted cast. (In a few scenes, the Gillmans' dog, a beautiful and personable white German shepherd, engages him in a fierce tug-of-war for the audience's attention, but Cage prevails.) In a way, that's a blessing: his goofball comic style gives "Amos & Andrew" a needed shot of lunatic energy after all that elaborate and rather laborious exposition. Over the course of his relatively brief career—his first starring rol was in Martha Coolidge's 1983 comedy "Valley Girl"—Cage has toned dow the outrageous, daredevil effects tha he used to go in for, which made som of his early performances excruciatin to watch. But not by much. He's stil plenty strange: a one-of-a-kind combination of droopy-faced cartoon character and yearningly roma tic leading man. His deep droningly mellow-tone voice—as unlikely an inst ment as a bass saxophone—has become marvellously expressive, because his sense o comic rhythm is confiden and commandingly weird his readings are usually touch slower than we expect and the words come out little too precisely, in th manner of someone who' under the influence and i taking great pains to conce it. In this movie's mos memorable scene, the plot stops dea while Cage delivers a dreamy, berser monologue about his childhood fascination with Sea-Monkeys, and he mak us hang on every word: even though w suspect that the anecdote isn't goin anywhere (and we're right), we want t be along for the ride.

Cage is reason enough to see "Amo & Andrew," but he can't quite save from the stubborn inconsequentialit that sets in about halfway throug At a certain point, the farce mechani start to feel as if they were runnin on sheer inertia, because the satiri premise that set the whole thing in mo tion isn't driving it anymore. Despite Cage's pyrotechnics and th clever complications of the plottin the movie loses urgency as it go along. Frye, whose script for Jonatha Demme's 1986 road movie "Something Wild" went all the way and the some, isn't nearly so adventurous th time. He damps down the potentially inflammatory elements of th material and settles for somethin that is, finally, no more than a pleasant, smartly constructed interracial buddy movie. In its modest wa "Amos & Andrew" is perfectly all righ it just isn't the deal we thought we we getting. ♦

THE THEATRE

MOONLIGHTING

BY EDITH OLIVER

THE inspired Bill Irwin, who is two-thirds clown to at least one-third angel, has found the ideal partner in David Shiner, stern of face and short of fuse, another fellow of infinite jest. Their show "Fool Moon," at the Richard Rodgers, accompanied by the Red Clay Ramblers, a remarkable band, whose cockeyed style can only be described as sui generis, is a dream come true. Mr. Shiner starts things off by moving into the audience and starting an argument (in pantomime, of course; not a word is spoken by either man, start to finish) about his seat, with much waving of ticket stubs, and then climbing into the box at stage right and fighting for a place—to the discomfort, in a manner of speaking, of the paying customers there. An usher orders him into the box at stage left, where he settles long enough for Mr. Irwin to shed his benign presence among us, though not without some personal risk, since he, too, climbs into the box and the two men hang from it until they eventually somersault onto the stage. At another point, Mr. Shiner brings in a movie camera, and, after several false starts during rehearsals with the usual complement of a hero, a heroine, a villain, and an assistant director, or whatever you call the fellow who snaps that hand-size blackboard, he shoots a length of film. So it goes. All Mr. Shiner's material is new (to me, that is), and a lot of it has to do with either scrapping with the audience or inviting various ladies and gentlemen up to the stage to take part in his sketches; even then, his manner is never short of bossy. I couldn't always make out, by the way, whether all these volunteers were actually the amateurs they were meant to be or were plants—not that it matters. No question about the woman in the row ahead of me, whose fur coat provided the occasion for a fierce, life-and-death struggle.

Mr. Irwin also brings along much new material for our unbounded delight, but I must say that his theatre trunk, when he dragged it onto the stage, was like a dear old friend as he shrank and disappeared into its bottomless depths. The endless snarls of spaghetti which he takes from a copper cauldron were also a welcome souvenir of auld lang syne; and, as if his funny presence were not enough, he treats us to any number of tricks (even switching from bright young Harlequin to gloomy Pantaloon quicker than the eye can blink) and dances—to, as I say, the glorious accompaniment of that band. But I've already told you too much about a show whose very essence should be surprise. Bill Irwin is the master of surprise and the master of my heart. Just before closing, he and Mr. Shiner, arm in arm, do a time step, and they leave us on the curve of a crescent moon. Benevolent Bill Irwin and his grouchy sidekick are on Broadway at last, right where they belong, now and forever. Set by Douglas Stein, costumes by Bill Kellard, and lighting by Nancy Schertler, all admirable.

"WRONG TURN AT LUNGFISH," at the Promenade, is billed as a play but is really a script on its feet. The director and co-dramatist, Garry Marshall, is an alumnus of television, and it certainly shows. Nevertheless, to ignore what amounts to a vehicle, however rickety, for George C. Scott is to look a sizable gift horse in the mouth. The setting is a private hospital bedroom. Mr. Scott is a cantankerous old professor, blind and dying, who is at the mercy of a tough young woman volunteer, who reads aloud to him, and of her brutal boyfriend. We, in turn, are at the mercy of classic poetry delivered in an abominable imitation of a New York street accent, to the accompaniment of snatches of Beethoven. There are, however, some passages of amusing dialogue, and Mr. Scott can make any line sound like an epigram; on the other hand, the ridiculous, sentimental ending is too much even for him. I might add that Tony Danza, a television star, makes his New York stage début as the boyfriend and shows himself a candidate for a decent role in a decent play someday. ◆

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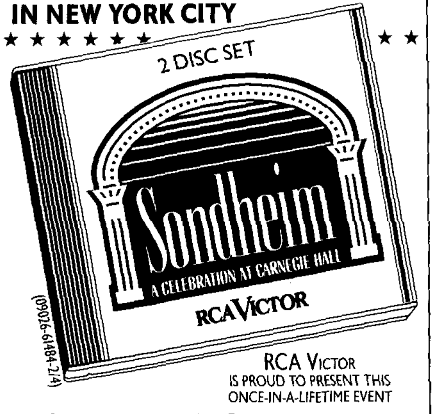

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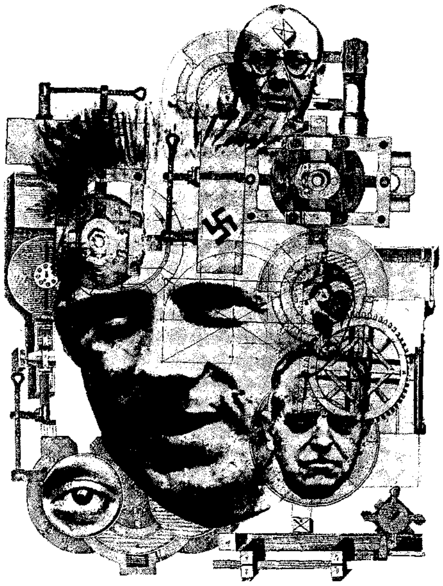
BOOKS

HEISENBERG'S UNCERTAINTIES

BY DANIEL J. KEVLES

DURING the Second World War, the nightmare that German physicists would deliver an atomic bomb into Hitler's hands haunted the inner circles of American science. Like most nightmares, this one melded foreboding with facts. Hitler's government controlled rich natural-uranium mines and the world's only plant for manufacturing heavy water, an essential ingredient in nuclear-reactor research. Germany had been a superpower in world physics, a Mecca for American students, its scientists mighty contributors to the recent revolution of quantum mechanics. Despite the loss of many world-class scientists as refugees from Nazism, Germany still appeared formidable: Otto Hahn, who, in 1938, had identified the phenomenon of nuclear fission using a tabletop apparatus in his Berlin laboratory, remained in Germany; so did Werner Heisenberg, a theorist of towering talents, who had conceived the famed uncertainty principle and, in 1932, at the age of thirty-one, had won a Nobel Prize for his co-invention of quantum mechanics.

In the mid-nineteen-thirties, Heisenberg, unimpeachably German but no Nazi himself, had defended Einstein's physics—"Jewish physics," Hitler's minions called it—and had found himself labelled a "white Jew," his career and his life at risk. While he was on a visit to the United States in the summer of 1939, close scientific friends, like the physicist Samuel Goudsmit, had pleaded with him to emigrate, but he had returned home, insisting that he was a German patriot with a duty to help maintain havens of decency in his country and protect German physics for the future. Wartime intelligence reports revealed that his patriotism had deepened to include the hope of a German victory, because it would counter the inroads of Soviets and Slavs threatening from the east. The reports also indicated that the Germans had initiated an atomic project, and that Heisenberg—"the most dangerous possible German in the field because of his brain power," as a distinguished British physicist told American officials—was involved in it. However, in December of 1944 an American scientific team, sent to Europe to ascertain the state of German nuclear affairs as part of a United States Army intelligence mission code-named Alsos, tentatively concluded that the German atomic-bomb project was paltry and was several years behind the Manhattan Project.



Thomas Powers' new book examines what the German physicist Werner Heisenberg knew about the bomb, and why Hitler never got it.

In 1947, Heisenberg explained in the British scientific journal *Nature* that he and his colleagues had known how to make a bomb but had been reluctant to build one for Hitler, and he added that in any case they had not had to face up to the moral decision of whether to proceed toward an atomic weapon, because even the military agreed that the task was too large for wartime Germany. They had therefore directed their energies toward making a reactor—which they called an "engine"—to exploit nuclear energy as a source of power to drive ships and electrical generators. Samuel Goudsmit, who headed the

Alsos scientific team, promptly responded, in *Life* (and elsewhere), declaring that German physicists *had* tried to build a bomb, that they had failed because of the meddling of Nazi administrators and their own commission of serious technical errors, and that Heisenberg's account disingenuously covered their blunders with a newly minted morality. To Goudsmit, who was Dutch by birth, and whose parents had died in the Holocaust—and to many other Allied physicists—the aim of trying to protect physics did not justify collaborating with the architects of Auschwitz.

The question of why German physicists did not produce an atomic bomb remains highly charged. It bears upon how we judge any scientist who participated in the Nazi machine or, for that matter, scientists anywhere who for the sake of science or ideology enter into a potentially Faustian bargain with the state. Scrutiny of the official German records by several historians has revealed that Heisenberg and his colleagues did in fact understand a good deal about the fundamentals of bomb physics, and that early in the war they raised the prospect not only of a power source but also of "an explosive of unimaginable consequence," as Heisenberg put it in a lecture to a gathering of high German officers in February of 1942.

In "Heisenberg's War: The Secret History of the German Bomb" (Knopf; $27.50) Thomas Powers argues that we can judge Heisenberg only if we can know his intentions, and those the official historical record does not reveal. To ferret them out, Powers has meticulously searched through what he calls "the shadow history of the war," seeking in letters, diaries, recollections, and intelligence files what Heisenberg and his friends "said to each other in the small hours of the night." An accomplished investigative journalist and historian of national security, Powers has exhumed a trove of material and deployed it brilliantly, though somewhat repetitiously, to illuminate the hidden history. His book is provocative and often gripping, and it inventively compels a reconsideration not only of Heisenberg's war but of the relationship to it of several key Manhattan Project scientists, Goudsmit among them.

Powers notes that the German nuclear effort, called the Uranium Club

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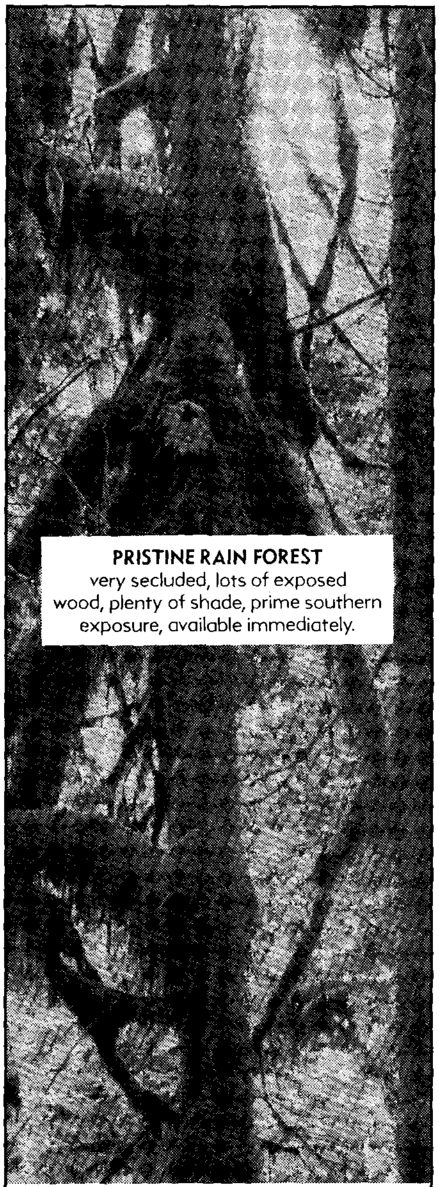

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at the time, comprised "an unruly mailing list of competing scientists whose only shared hope was to survive the war." Some in Heisenberg's branch of the club, including Heisenberg himself and his close younger friend Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, who was the son of the second-highest official in Hitler's Foreign Office, also wanted to exploit the government's interest in nuclear matters to rescue German physics from Nazi know-nothings. This was a hazardous game, as Heisenberg knew.

Some of Heisenberg's intimates revealed in a trail of leaks intended for the Allies how he was playing the game. Consistent in content, the leaks were exemplified in a remarkable, unequivocal message that one of Heisenberg's confidants—the theorist Fritz Houtermans, a socialist who had spent time in both Nazi and Soviet prisons and was under suspicion by the Gestapo—had asked a Jewish-refugee physicist named Fritz Reiche to carry by memory to the United States. A contemporary handwritten summary of Reiche's report, which he delivered to a group of physicists in Princeton in March of 1941, reads:

> Reliable colleague who is working at a technical research laboratory asked him to let us know that a large number of German physicists are working intensively on the problem of the uranium bomb under the direction of Heisenberg, that Heisenberg himself tries to delay the work as much as possible, fearing the catastrophic results of a success. But he cannot help fulfilling the orders given to him.

In September of 1941, Heisenberg paid a visit to his mentor and conscience, Niels Bohr, in occupied Denmark, attempting, it seems, to convey that he was at work on a nuclear-reactor project and wanted to keep his research confined to that, but he so fumbled the try that he left Bohr furious, and convinced that he was designing a bomb.

The options for delay were inherent in the details of bomb physics. By late 1941, the Germans, like the Allies, recognized that two types of atomic weapons could be fashioned—one of pure uranium 235 (U-235), the readily fissionable isotope of the element, and the other of plutonium, a newly discovered element that would be produced in the controlled chain reaction of a nuclear reactor from a sister isotope, uranium 238 (U-238). They also knew that U-235 represents less than one per cent of natural uranium and cannot be chemically separated from its far more abundant sister. Separation by nonchemical means would be extremely difficult, so obtaining enough pure U-235 to make an explosive—what physicists call a "critical mass"—would require at least several years and untold millions of marks. Powers points out that whenever Heisenberg touted the destructive power of a uranium bomb he also stressed the difficulties, thus discouraging pursuit of a U-235 weapon and encouraging the investment of resources primarily in the creation of a reactor that would produce power and—ultimately, perhaps—element 94, as the Germans called plutonium.

But did he, as his disbelievers insist, emphasize the difficulties because he had committed the key technical blunder of overestimating them? The issue turns on how large the critical mass of pure U-235 would have to be. In several wartime comments, Heisenberg implied that as much as a thousand kilograms would be required—a quantity that would indeed have been impossible to obtain soon enough to affect the outcome of the war. He was heard to make a comparable estimate on August 6, 1945, the day the uranium bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. At the time, Heisenberg and nine other German nuclear physicists, including Hahn and Weizsäcker, were interned at Farm Hall, an estate outside Cambridge, England, where the bedrooms and common rooms were electronically bugged and the conversations routinely recorded and transcribed. The night of August 6th, the microphones picked up an unguarded, emotional discussion that started with skepticism that the Americans had succeeded in producing a nuclear bomb, because the Germans did not think that anyone could possibly have obtained enough pure U-235—perhaps two tons, Hahn remarked that Heisenberg had said at one point—to form a critical mass.

Several times during the war, however, Heisenberg had indicated that the critical mass would be only a few tens of kilograms, which was in the right ballpark and was small enough to be considered obtainable; indeed, at a meeting in Berlin in 1942, responding to a question from Field Marshal Erhard Milch, of the Air Force Ministry, Heisenberg had said that London could be levelled with a bomb about as large as a pineapple. The Farm Hall transcripts, which the British kept secret until February of 1992, and which Powers has examined, reveal that on August 6th Hahn called Heisenberg's telling him more than once during the war that a uranium bomb could be made with only fifty kilograms of the pure metal. That same night, Heisenberg admitted to Hahn that he had never actually calculated the necessary mass. Eight days later, in a lecture to his colleagues on bomb physics, he led them through the exercise of designing a weapon, showing that it could be done with sixteen kilograms of U-235, which was very close to the actual critical mass of the metal. The lecture was stunning in its technical mastery, but also impressive was the fact that Heisenberg had adumbrated part of his analysis in calculations that he had made just two days after Hiroshima. Powers contends that Heisenberg's resolution of the critical-mass problem was so quick that he must have worked out the intricacies of a uranium bomb much earlier, and the Farm Hall transcripts, he says, offer strong evidence that Heisenberg "cooked up a plausible method of estimating critical mass which gave an answer in tons, and that he well knew how to make a bomb with far less, but kept the knowledge to himself."

Powers gives too much credit to Heisenberg. Calculation of the critical mass requires certain essential numbers that characterize the fissioning behavior of U-235. These numbers can be determined reliably only by actual measurement. It is clear from the Farm Hall transcripts that Heisenberg had not acquired these numbers experimentally in the course of his wartime research, and that no one else had, either. The news of Hiroshima—that it had been bombed with a uranium device enormous in explosive power yet compact enough to be carried in an airplane—had provided him with a giant hint toward determining the numbers: they had to conform to the reality of the working weapon, and that constraint enabled him to figure out the critical mass in a tour de force of rapid, but advantaged, estimate and deduction. At Farm Hall, Heisenberg explained to Hahn that the reason he had not calculated the critical mass of the isotope precisely was that he had believed that U-235 could not be separated out—which is to say that Heisenberg must have judged obtaining even tens of kilograms of pure U-235 a virtually impossible task. He was right that separation would be costly; the principal American installation for the purpose, at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, was huge. Yet Manhattan Project scientists, a number of whom had in the nineteen-thirties built sizable cyclotrons, and big laboratories to go with them, had obviously been undaunted by the obstacle, and wartime Germany had been able to provide the immense resources that Wernher von Braun required for his Peenemünde rocket projects. Heisenberg had neither the Big Science temperament nor the experience to envision an industrial-scale separation effort. Physicists in other branches of the Uranium Club did, but he did not throw his prestige behind their ambitions.

Not that he lacked opportunity: he was party to several crucial meetings that high Nazi officials held during the six months starting in December, 1941, to evaluate military-research programs for their pertinence to the war effort. Powers, taking an original tack, probes Heisenberg's silences in these colloquies—what he did not say or did not do to advance a bomb project. In all the meetings, Heisenberg accorded no more than brief and casual mention to the alternative route to a bomb—reactor-produced element 94, which did not pose a severe separation problem—nor did he call for a crash program to pursue it. He apparently did not even mention element 94 at a meeting in Berlin on June 4, 1942, where he had the attention of Albert Speer, the boss of the German economy and an enthusiast of big-payoff projects (like von Braun's, for example,

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for which he would ultimately provide tens of thousands of slave laborers). When Speer asked how much money was needed to press ahead with the nuclear effort, Heisenberg mentioned a figure so ridiculously low that Speer decided—and so informed Hitler—to relegate the project to a low priority. In Powers' view, Heisenberg managed, without conspiring with friends like Weiszäcker, or revealing enough to raise the suspicions of the Gestapo, "to guide the German atomic research effort into a broom closet, where scientists tinkered until the war ended."

Despite the downgrading and the wartime reports of Heisenberg's foot-dragging intentions, the fear that Heisenberg was devoting his mighty brain to the cause of achieving a German nuclear weapon remained undiminished among Manhattan Project personnel, including many of its key scientists and its director, General Leslie R. Groves. The suspicion led the physicists Hans Bethe and Victor Weisskopf, both normally levelheaded, to propose formally, in October of 1942, that Heisenberg be kidnapped in Switzerland, where, as they had learned, he was to lecture later that year. Although the Bethe-Weisskopf initiative was soon rejected—any such move would surely have alienated the neutral Swiss—it eventually helped inspire several operations to deny the German nuclear effort its scientists, and particularly Heisenberg.

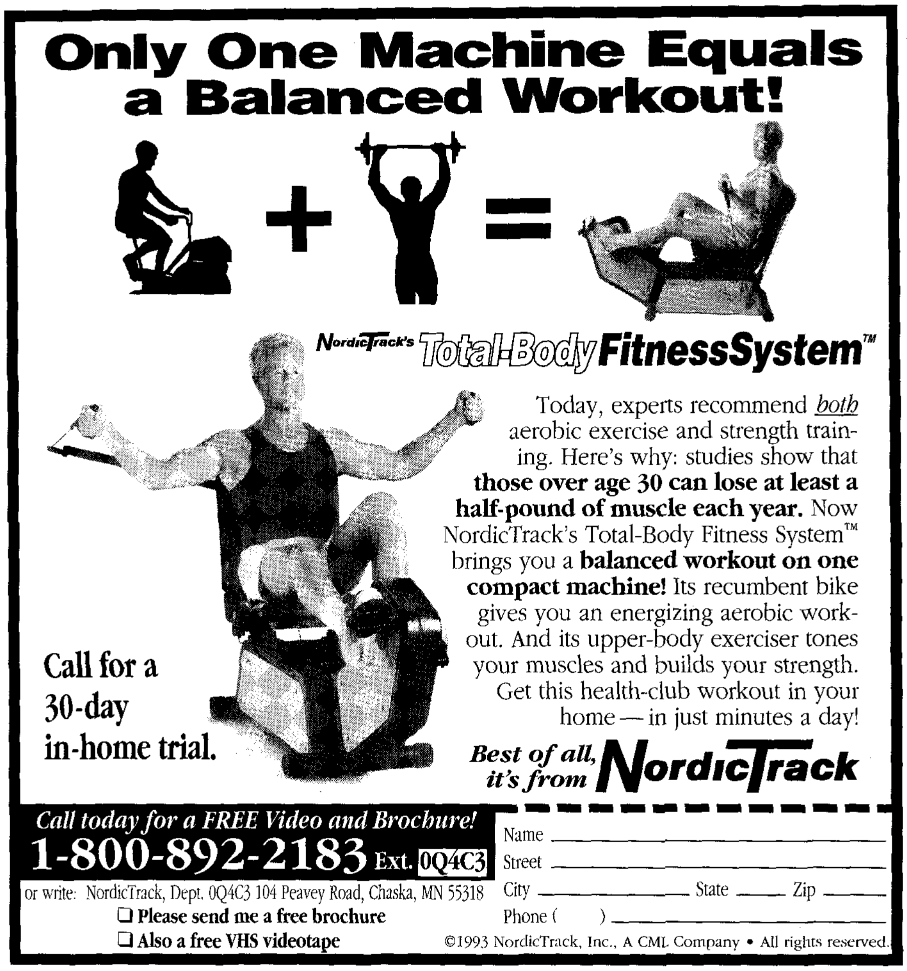
Powers devotes substantial space to this campaign against Heisenberg, and his account is chilling. One strategy was to bomb the research institutes that Heisenberg and Hahn directed in Berlin, the objectives to include, as General George C. Marshall learned in an explanatory memorandum from the Army Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, "the killing of scientific personnel employed therein." Another strategy was a revival of the kidnapping idea and then its transmutation into an operation that Bethe and Weisskopf knew nothing about—the assassination of Heisenberg.

Powers tells the story mesmerizingly, having compiled evidence that the scheme was real, that it was fostered by General Groves and the members of the intelligence operations that he established for the Manhattan Project, and that it reached its climax on December 18, 1944, in a lecture hall in Zurich. In the second row, Moe Berg, the celebrated and cerebral major-league catcher, who had finished his career in 1939, with the Boston Red Sox and was now an intelligence operative, sat with a .32-calibre pistol in his pocket listening to Heisenberg talk abou physics, and resolved to kill him if his remarks indicated that he was seriously at work on an atomic bomb. Berg scribbled a note: "As I listen, I am uncertain—see Heisenberg's uncertainty principle—what to do to H . . . discussing math while Rome burns—if they knew what I'm thinking."

Although Berg obviously did not pull the trigger Powers holds that the operation that began with Bethe and Weisskopf and eventually put Berg in the Zurich lecture hall contributed to the clouding o Heisenberg's reputation after the war Goudsmit was complicit in the early kidnapping proposals and, according to Powers, in the assassination scheme itself, having been one of the last o Groves' men to brief Berg, in Paris, before he left for Switzerland. Berg late wrote, in notes about the Paris talks "Nothing spelled out, but Heisenberg must be rendered *hors de combat.*" Power implies that not only Goudsmit bu Bethe, Weisskopf, and others were psychologically disposed to reject Heisenberg's account of his passive moral resistance to a German bomb, because to accept it was to indict themselves fo their involvements in one or another o the get-Heisenberg projects—and, beyond that, for their own determination to build the world's first atomic bomb.

Here is Powers' evident larger aim: to spotlight Heisenberg as a moral witness against scientists who would forge weapons of mass destruction for their governments. In Powers' judgment, Heisenberg visited Bohr in 1941 primarily wit the hope that if he revealed that Germa scientists were not building an atomi bomb Allied scientists might be persuaded to forgo the construction of one too. Powers proposes that Heisenberg postwar claim that moral scruple had figured in his thinking about the bomb could be taken as a rebuke to Manhattan Project scientists for what they had done during the war, noting that if some of them were outraged by the assertion it was because they were "extremely sensitive to any suggestion that they had done something wrong in building the atomic bomb—especially any suggestion which came from Germans." At the time of Heisenberg's visit, however, Bohr, probably rightly, nterpreted his purpose as self-serving patriotism—to stop the Allies from building atomic bombs and dropping them on Germany, a possibility that, n the recollection of Heisenberg's wife, errified him throughout the war. More mportant, Heisenberg himself understood that resistance to building bombs for Hitler's totalitarian state could hardly be taken as establishing a moral standard applicable to scientists who devised hem for the democratic governments hat were Hitler's enemies.

Heisenberg was an unusual man in unusual circumstances, forced to make difficult choices concerning himself, his physics, and his country in a viciously dangerous environment. Even so, it is difficult to accept him as a paragon of moral purpose. Unashamedly eager to use the war to serve German physics, he ngratiated himself with Hitler's henchmen by laying out the requirements for a bomb, thereby obtaining support for nuclear research, his own appointment s director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Instiute of Physics, in Berlin, and the symbolic reëstablishment of modern physics his as well as Einstein's) in the German cientific hierarchy. He was seemingly one-deaf to the moral dimensions of politics, uncomprehending of the revulion that Hitler's domination of Europe imulated in Bohr and in so many othrs. Still, while Heisenberg was not a aint, neither was he the devil that Goudsmit saw. The Farm Hall transcripts tend to confirm Powers' reading f the shadow history—that, in the context of Hitler's Germany, Heisenberg nd his circle were deeply ambivalent bout their nuclear project, that a moral reluctance to see it succeed contributed to its failure, and that Heisenberg himelf, as he confessed to his friends on August 6, 1945, was at "the bottom of my heart really glad that it was to be an ngine and not a bomb." ♦



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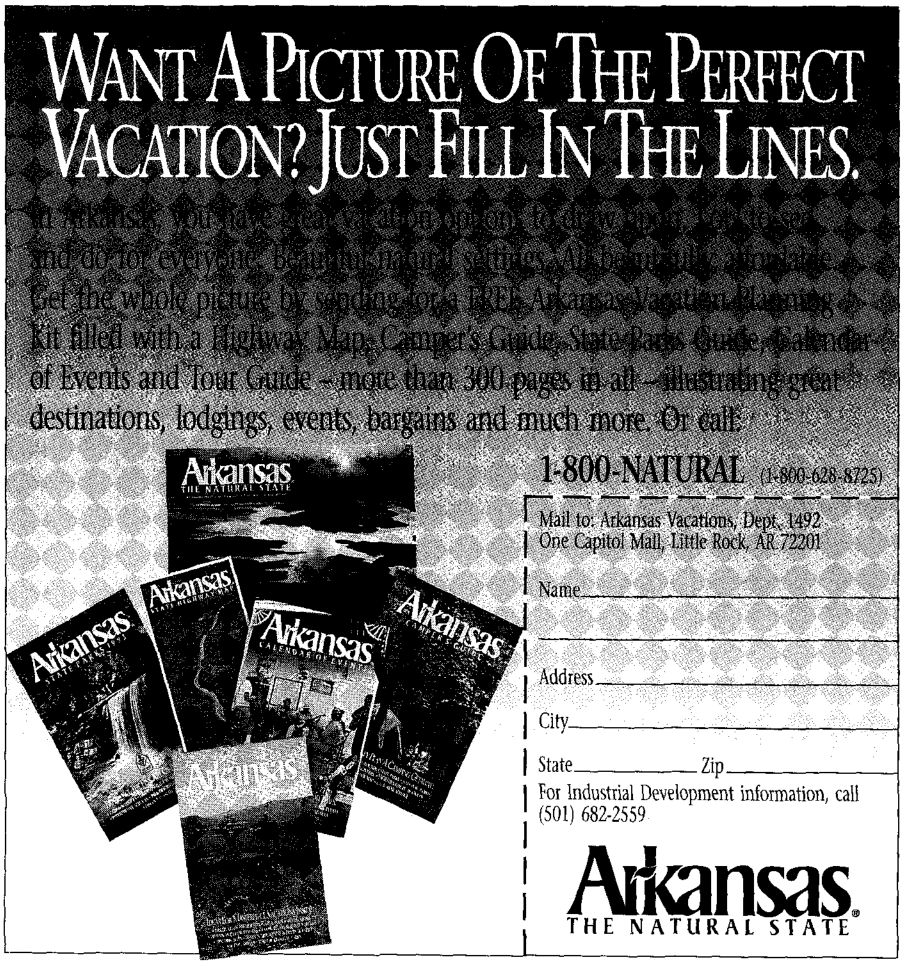

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UNSUNG HEROES

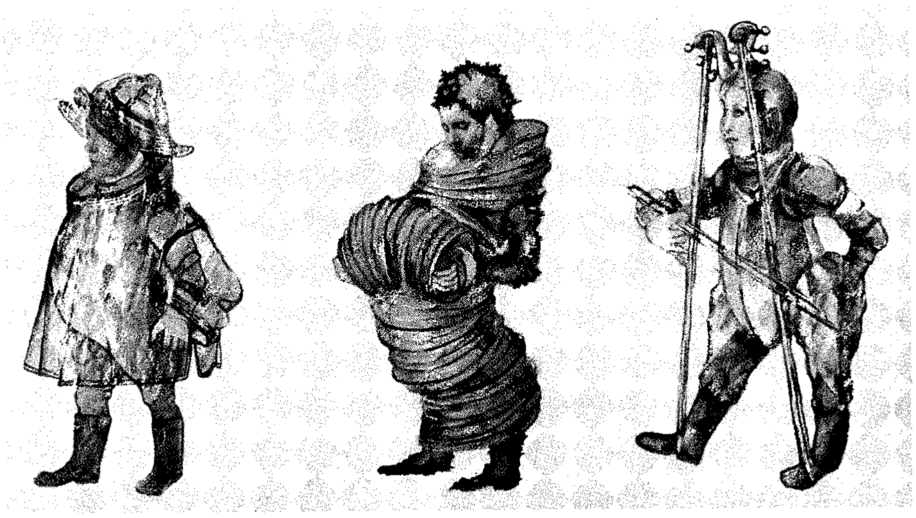
BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

A SINGLE Mozart piece, otherwise nothing from the first two centuries of European opera; a Rossini and two Donizettis; four Verdis and five Wagners; samples of musical drama from France (one) and the Slavonic world (two); four Puccinis, "Cav and Pag," and two operas by Strauss; and a single piece written since the First World War. The schedule is the Met's this season, but it could equally be that of Covent Garden thirty years ago, or Vienna thirty years before that, because the core operatic repertory has everywhere been so constrained and resistant to change. However, a couple of blocks up from the Met is a place offering not just the occasional Mozart but a broad spectrum of opera from Monteverdi, Cavalli, and Purcell to Gluck, Paisiello, and Haydn, offering not just one interpretation of Donizetti's Lucia but a dozen, not just two Strauss operas but nearly all of them, and a range of modern opera reaching to works written within the last decade by John Adams, Robert Ashley, and Wolfgang Rihm. That place, of course, is Tower Records.

For as long as the classic repertory represented all that was available, a companion to the landmarks was enough: the success of Gustav Kobbé's guide, through nearly three-quarters of a century, demonstrates that. But the purchaser of compact disks is likely to be curious about the operas of Pietro Antonio Cesti, Simon Mayr, or Alexander Zemlinsky, or about the singing of Margarethe Siems or Cesare Siepi. We live in a less tidy operatic world; we need a less tidy operatic bible. "The New Grove Dictionary of Opera" (Grove's Dictionaries of Music; $850) may just about be untidy enough.

These four grand volumes have to achieve untidiness without being untidily made. The odd lapse only enhances one's appreciation of the editorial zeal for accuracy and consistency; and the quantity of information, especially of bibliographical information, makes an impressive show of thoroughness. The most highly regarded works—roughly speaking, those likely to be done at the Met—are typically treated to three or four pages of information, commentary, and illustration. (The plates, usually of drawings or photographs relating to the first production of a work, are an unmitigated triumph.) Lesser pieces are dealt with more briefly, and there are biographies of composers, librettists, singers, conductors, directors, designers, dancing masters, and leading representatives of all the other operatic trades.

As an encyclopedia of works and places and people—and these categories surely account for nine-tenths of the material—the dictionary contains a great deal to fascinate and instruct. In that narrow but crucial area where interests are



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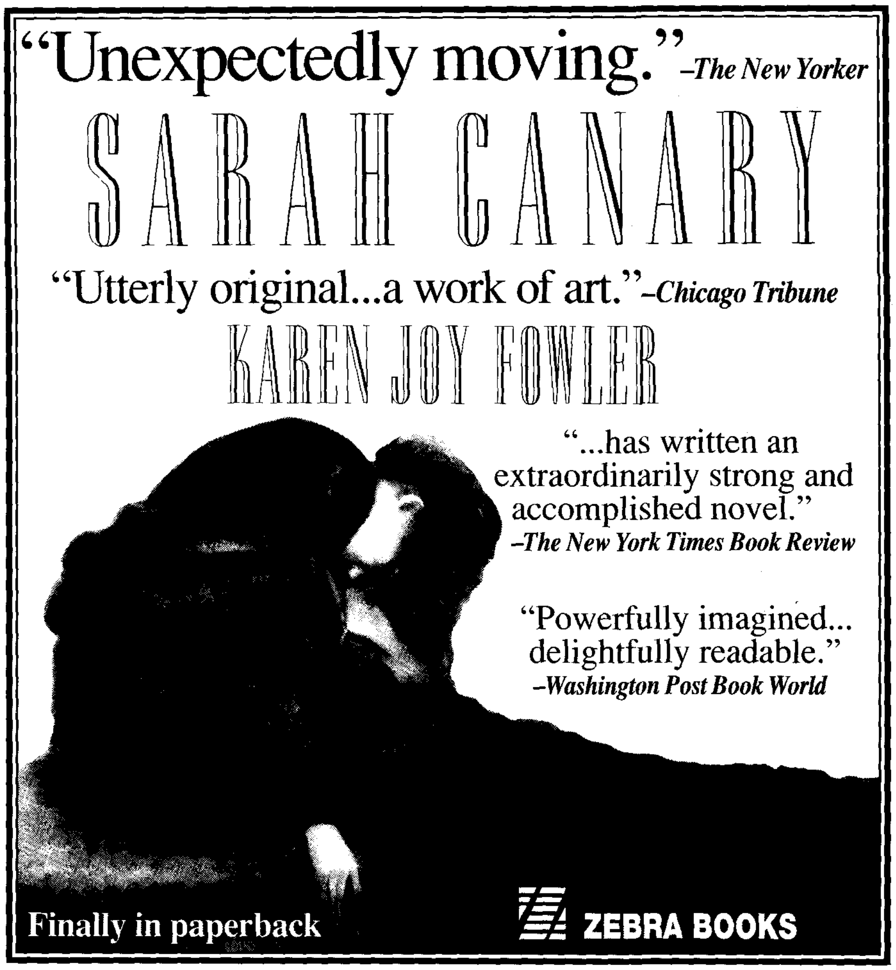
shared with the Met, the writing is often as sensitive and provocative as it is scholarly; there are outstanding entries, for instance, from Barry Millington on Wagner's works, from Michele Girardi on "Pagliacci," and from Julian Rushton in a fine, clear diagnosis of what makes Mozart's operatic music special. Down a tier, there are numberless articles that make one want to see and hear the rarer works they treat: Marita P. McClymonds on the operas of Giuseppe Sarti and Niccolò Jommelli, M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet on those of Étienne-Nicolas Méhul, Richard Langham Smith on Roussel's "Padmâvatî," and, perhaps above all, Richard Taruskin on the lesser-known works of Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky. Taruskin covers most of the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Russian repertory, and writes consistently out of an unusual combination of detailed knowledge and fierce passion.

And then there are the operas that one knows one will never see but that have their places here in a fantastical repertory of the imagination—operas like "Il Palazzo Incantato," performed in Rome in 1642, with music by Luigi Rossi and a libretto by Giulio Rospigliosi (who, one learns elsewhere, later became Pope Clement IX). Margaret Murata's entry on this piece informs us that the enchanted palace of the title is the creation of a sorcerer, and that knights and ladies—many of them lured out of Ariosto to look here for lost lovers or friends—are his prisoners "in its endless, empty corridors, stairways and balconies." Here "the lords and ladies wander in and out, sighing and searching, while an octet of phantoms in two choruses dances and comments on the deceptions of love."

Wonderful as this is, it doesn't quite tell the whole story. One has to travel on a few pages in order to learn that the soprano castrato Marc'Antonio Pasqualini sang in Rossi's opera. Anyone interested in it might therefore miss some extra information (not to mention a portrait of Pasqualini being crowned with laurel by a nude, and conspicuously non-castrate, Apollo). But even if you chance on the Pasqualini entry you won't learn there which role in the Rossi opera he sang, only that he specialized in "lamenting females."

No doubt "Il Palazzo Incantato" is more interesting than important, and more bemusing than either, but one must conclude that there might be other unnecessary blind alleys in the labyrinthine



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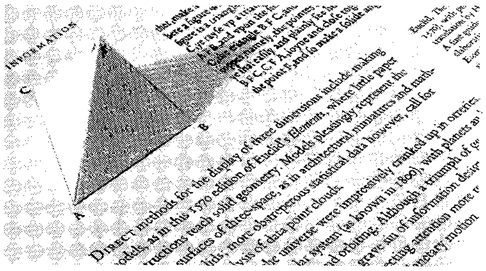

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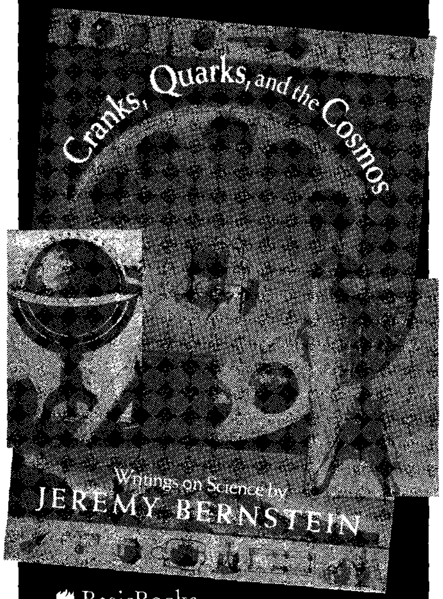

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enchanted palace of this dictionary. Moreover, the notion of a castrato impersonating distressed ladies, for an audience compounded of cardinals, takes something away from the brisk assertion of the editor, Stanley Sadie, that opera, invented in Italy around 1600, sets itself apart from other kinds of musical drama in other cultures. For surely the irretrievably lost art of a Pasqualini may have had more in common with that of the female impersonators of Kabuki or Beijing opera than with that of, say, Placido Domingo. And, if the exclusions were to be maintained, then at least it might have been courteous to describe this as a dictionary of Western opera.

What separates the Western tradition from others is, perhaps, less its artistic than its social nature. Edward A. Langhans, in his entry on "Theatre architecture," states the case boldly: "Opera patrons for centuries have been, for the most part, upper class." But it can't be quite as simple as that. The Academy of Music on Fourteenth Street at Irving Place, where opera was performed between 1854 and 1886, had a capacity of forty-six hundred. Can they all have been, in any meaningful sense, "upper class"? And what about the audience in San Francisco in 1854 when—as Katherine K. Preston indicates in a careful survey of what is known about travelling troupes in America—Anna Thillon gave them "La Sonnambula"? It could be argued that the repertory was not being defined by New York in the nineteenth century, and still less by San Francisco in the aftermath of the Gold Rush. But even in the theatres that may have had that determining role—in Paris, Venice, and Milan—the audience must have been more variously composed than the term "upper class" can suggest. It ought to be possible, from the evidence of subscription lists and diaries, to come to some conclusions about the audiences in particular theatres at particular times. With luck, this may be an area in which the dictionary will serve to stimulate scholarly investigation, not just to record it.

Another, possibly related question that seems to be underexplored is that of the evolution of the Met-style repertory. Among the many sound and penetrating observations that Bernard Williams makes, in his keynote article on the nature of opera, is that the genre is characterized by its recyclings of the same few pieces, and that the late repertory-period works—the operas of Puccini and Strauss—take this recycling into account, so that the appreciation of them is partly a matter of seeing and hearing the old tricks work again. But nobody seems very sure about when and how the repertory began to stabilize, except that Mozart's later comedies and Gluck's "Orfeo" are the earliest operas that never had to be rediscovered. Again, the information must exist that would make it possible to show how, no doubt with national divergences of timing and selection, the roster of regularly performed works began to become fixed.

If this is another area in which a lacuna in the dictionary reveals a lacuna in what is known, there are gaps and insufficiencies that could have been avoided. In a general way, the coverage of the most recent half century is skimpy and uneven. More particularly, some important opportunities have been lost in the treatment of types of voice and scene. The article on "Soprano," for instance, is evidently the work of a committee, being full of repetitions and descending to a piecemeal history of singers. As for scene types, there's a good piece by Stephen A. Willier on the mad scene (though, like all the generic articles, it peters out when it gets to the twentieth century, failing to notice Schoenberg's "Erwartung," for instance, as a mad scene of opera length); otherwise, short pieces on the "Sommeil" and the "Ombra scene" don't make—let alone begin to analyze—the connections that can be found with the representation of a dreamed character in, for example, "Götterdämmerung." The discussion of voices and operatic topoi could also have been vastly enriched if the net had been spread to include works in non-European traditions.

Having remarked on what's missing, I feel obliged to point out a few articles that would not be missed. Far too many living singers have entries, most of which read like publicity announcements and will be out of date in three years' time. Michael Burden has a struggle to keep going for half a column on John Christopher Smith's "Ulysses," which had a single playing, in London on April 16, 1733. And of Dennis Riley we learn that he "has written two one-act operas, *Rappaccini's Daughter* (1981-84) and *Cats' Concert* (1983), neither of which has been performed." ♦

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

The Collected Stories

by John McGahern

(Knopf; $24)

MCGAHERN writes the way Beckett would have if Beckett had been born Catholic. There's not a hint of blarney in these thirty-four stories, most of them set in the author's native Ireland, and rarely a whisper of the Troubles or of the world beyond the next parish. McGahern's Ireland is one in which time never happened—a grim, priest-ridden world of police barracks, commercial boarding houses, soggy farms, and oppressive rural schools—and its people are animated by ancient grudges, cruel marriages, professional failures, and doomed love affairs conducted in damp doorways. What saves the stories, if not the characters, from utter bleakness is McGahern's alertness to the texture of the natural world, which shines through with a kind of steely purity, and to the special music of Irish speech. Some of the dialogue amounts to found poetry, and ome of it is blackly and terrifyingly comic. The stories are arranged in oughly chronological order, and there is a progression both in style and in the author's attitude toward his disillusioned ubjects—a movement not toward acceptance, exactly, but toward expansiveness and patience. The stories become fuller and slower, more inclusive and more tolerant, and their sadness even akes on a certain sweetness.

GENERAL

Pandaemonium: Ethnicity in International Politics

by Daniel Patrick Moynihan

(Oxford; $19.95)

A BOOK of modest length that begs, not so modestly, to suggest that on a ertain crucial question the author has been right and nearly everyone else has been wrong. The crucial question is: What makes the political soup boil? Senator Moynihan points out that many years ago he and Nathan Glazer, in "Beyond the Melting Pot," named ethnicity as a critical agent of political passion; modern history shows, he thinks, that appeals to tribal identity have indeed persistently trumped appeals to class olidarity (witness the failure of international Marxism) and to national interest (witness the fissuring of the Soviet Union). The demons of race and ethnicity are on the loose again today because, he argues, the Cold War, which effectively corked the bottle of international ethnic strife, is over, and because the United States pays lip service—as it has since the time of Woodrow Wilson—to a notion of "the self-determination of peoples" which has proved a recipe for civil slaughter around the world. Getting the demons back in the bottle is probably impossible, Moynihan says, but we might at least stop pretending that some New World Order is at hand. As always, the Senator's prose is marvellously well turned, and is pungent with the memories of long-ago controversies to which he was once a party; so one is glad that although he quotes a good deal of previously published writing in this book, much of it is his own.

Battlefield: Farming a Civil War Battleground

by Peter Svenson

(Faber & Faber; $21.95)

PETER SVENSON was looking for privacy, not history, when he bought a forty-acre farm in Virginia. His farm, however, encompassed a significant portion of the site of the Battle of Cross Keys, an 1862 contest in which forces under Stonewall Jackson repulsed a Union attack led by John C. Frémont. In alternating chapters, the author tells two stories: one relates his growing knowledge of the battle; the other describes how he built his house and began farming the land. He finds eyewitness accounts that help re-create the engagement, but the most vivid chapters of the book concern farming. He fights weeds and groundhogs, restores an old barn, buys farm implements. The chapters of warfare and farm work ultimately knit together; the reader's understanding of the forty acres makes the battle more comprehensible and more terrible, and the battle's horrors render the current peaceful state of the land more precious.

Fear and Loathing: The Strange and Terrible Saga of Hunter S. Thompson

by Paul Perry

(Thunder's Mouth Press; $22.95)

THIS is a "violently unauthorized biography" of the "outlaw" *Rolling Stone* reporter and noted substance abuser. A literate juvenile delinquent from Louisville, Thompson apparently entered journalism because it offered escape from a conventional life. Real success came, however, when he began blatantly obtruding upon stories with his own bizarre thoughts and escapades. This, of course, was Gonzo, made possible by Thompson's angry recklessness: threatening homosexuals in Big Sur with a .44 Magnum, trying to paint "Fuck the Pope" on an America's Cup entry. He emerges here as both ingratiating and appalling: he thinks his populist hatred of politicians gives him license to print fictions about them; he zaps "land rapers" who would develop Aspen but sees nothing wrong with shooting its wildlife. Perry tells many funny anecdotes, but does little to explain Thompson's mania as a function of the sixties, or of anything else; nor does he assess his literary merits. The closest Thompson comes to a flesh-and-blood human being is in the stark chapter "Prisoner of Gonzo," where he finds himself unable to write and unable to escape his renegade image.

VERSE

The Sacraments of Desire

by Linda Gregg

(Graywolf; $14.95)

DEVOTIONAL poetry celebrating the mysteries of eroticism: poetry "of stars and stone and the ordinary"—the ordinary here given a mythic lustre, an interplay of "having and loss," "alms and penitence." The landscape is at once contemporary and of antiquity, and Gregg's typical language is silvery and agile, her tone level and concentrated. Poetry so pure and single-minded may run the risk of being an unconscious parody of itself. The wonder is how often Gregg is able to avoid the risk, and how ardently, yet carefully, she can weave her spell—existing, at her very best, in the company of H.D.'s "sparks that unknot the flesh." ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

A HOLLYWOOD LEXICON

BY DAVID FREEMAN

"It's package or die! Get your attachments together."

"You need a new lingual persona. What are you selling?"

" 'Wall Street' meets 'Broadway Danny Rose.' "

"Right. I think your raid perception is a problem."

"Can't talk. Gotta roll the calls."

AGENTS in Hollywood are celebrities, surrounded at screenings and fawned upon in restaurants. They're more powerful than their clients, who are usually their supplicants. This is because there are more people than jobs, and agents are the brokers of opportunity.

Package or die: The mantra of the young and ambitious. "Packaging" means providing the important elements of a deal: the script, the star, and perhaps the director. The catch is that if you don't take all the elements you can't have any of them. Packaging so dominates television that agencies don't take commissions from packaged clients. Instead, the networks pay the agencies a fee. This arrangement makes C.A.A., I.C.M., and William Morris the de-facto producers of much of network TV.

Attachments: An agent will package a hot script by saying, "We have the following attachments," then naming clients who must be hired before the script will be sold. Writers sometimes benefit from this; agencies always do.

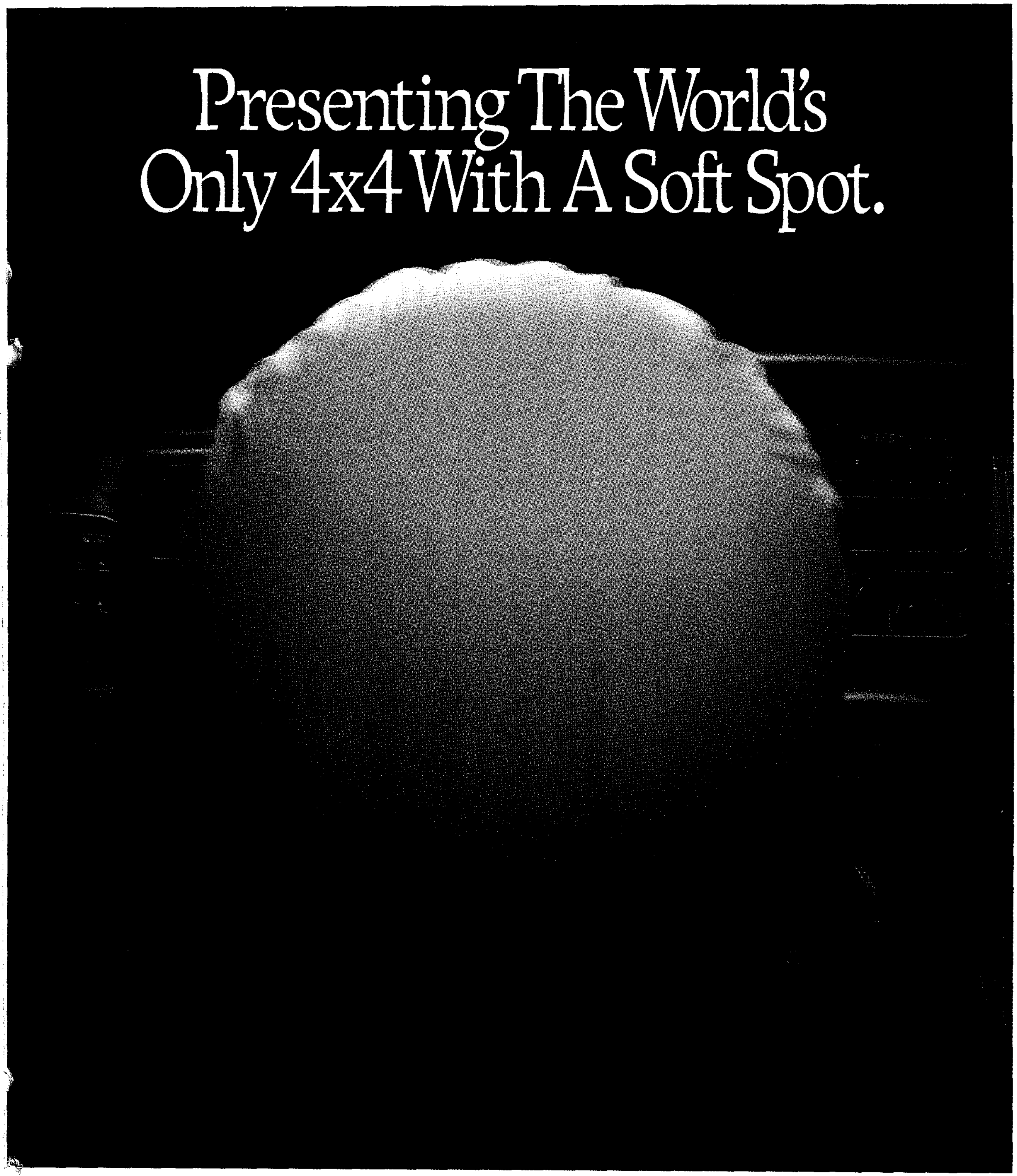
Lingual persona: Now that actors all talk about themselves as if they worked in marketing ("I need to position myself with the prime-time twelve-twenties before I make my play in features"), their agents have had to find a new professional language. Unlike the old-style booking agents, famous for calling everyone "baby" or "sweetheart," the agents of the moment (who rarely call anyone not in diapers "baby") present themselves as dealmaking machines who are also knowledgeable about the world and literature. Their lingual persona, or vocabulary, is typically either New Age ("The deal will happen when it happens. If you hurry, you stumble. Breathe blue") or marked by foreign phrases and literary references ("We'll pursue cable options, *faute de mieux*, but I worry that the center cannot hold").

Meets: Allows an agent to evoke a proposed film by referring to its betters. A comedy about a teen-age femme fatale becomes " 'Fatal Attraction' meets 'Where the Boys Are.' " A yuppie murder-suicide is " 'The Big Chill' meets 'The Wild Bunch.' "

Raid: Pursuing another agent's client. A typical gambit is "Are you happy?" It is a given that no one is happy, everyone is vulnerable. The most sought-after clients are not the least happy but, rather, the most successful. Raiding is also called poaching. Older agents claim they rarely poach, and they may even be telling the truth. For the younger cowboys and girls it's a blood sport.

Perception: One raiding technique is to assure the targeted client that life-changing possibilities are at hand. "You're perceived as a TV writer," the agent wil say, "but we can put you in features." It's always "we," suggesting an army standing ready. Of a writer an agent might say, "She has a comedy perception but she can do Westerns." An agent trying to sell an undersized actor to a producer might begin, "He has a short perception, but he can play tall."

Roll the calls: In the agency business, the number of calls you get is roughly what rushing yardage is to an N.F.L. running back. Agents often get a hundred or more phone messages in a day, and they return them in batches. On the command of "Roll the calls," an assistant works the callback sheet feeding the agent calls and juggling them so that the most importan people are kept waiting the least amoun of time. Instead of pressing phones to their ears, some agents wear headsets which make them look like air-traffic controllers. The telephoning never stops. When an agent is driving, an assistant in the office, patches calls to a speakerphone in the car. (No automotive headsets yet.) The streets of Los Angeles are dotted with Armani-clad motorists in BMWs and Mercedeses yelling mystical remarks or the odd scrap of Yeats seemingly into the air. ♦



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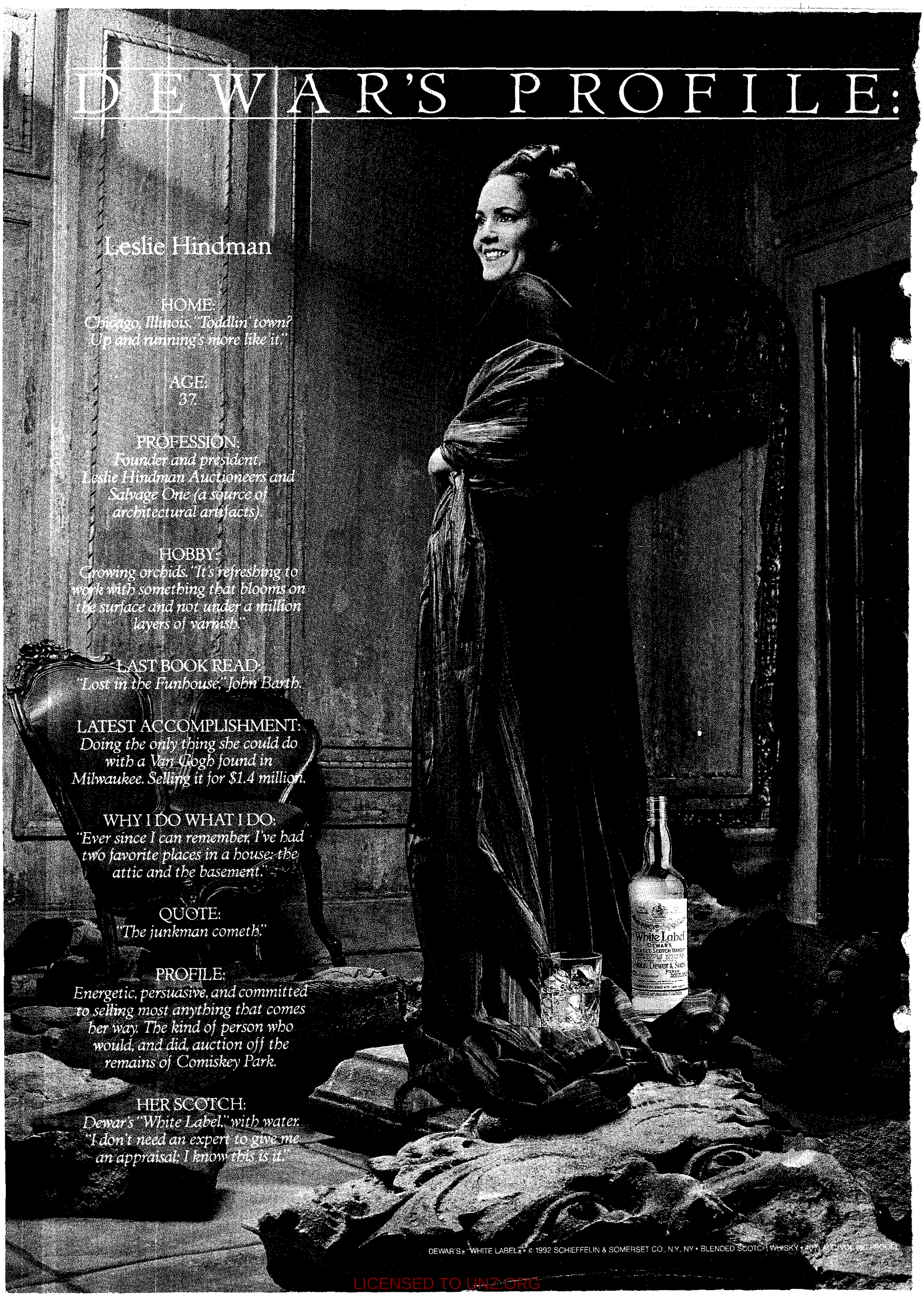

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